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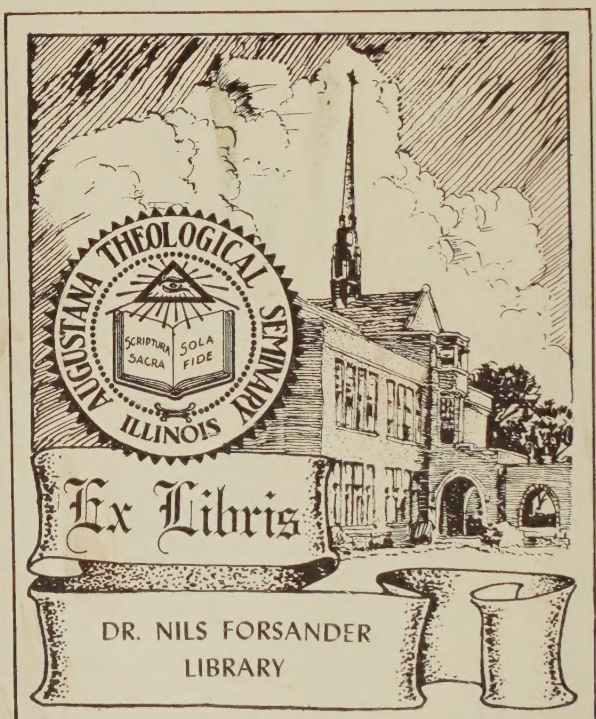
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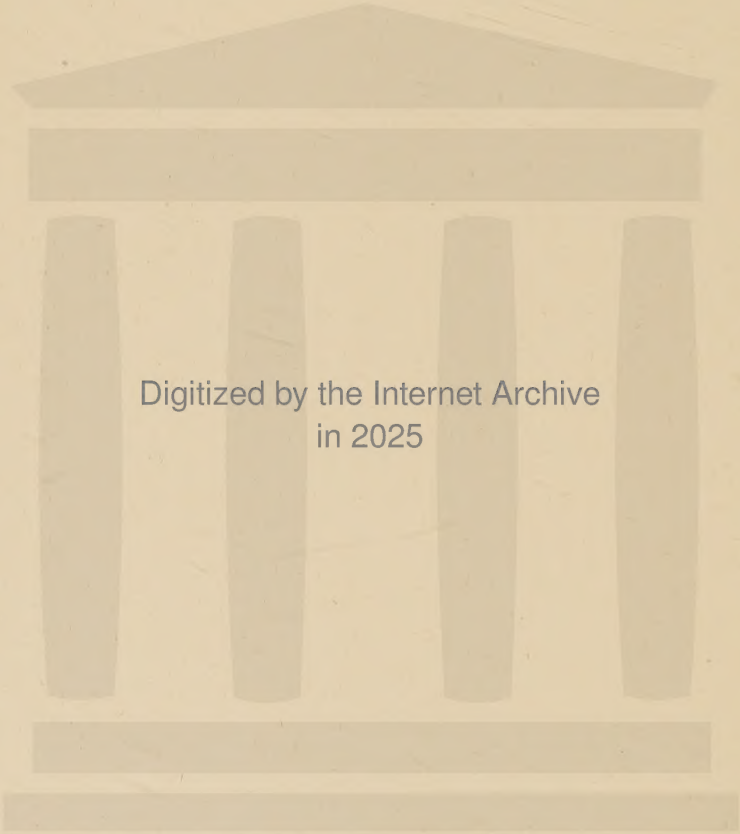
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BY

C. H. SPURGEON.

VOL. V.

PSALM CIV. TO CXVIII.

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1882.

AUTHORIZATION.

"*Messrs. Funk & Wagnall have entered into an arrangement with me to reprint* THE TREASURY OF DAVID *in the United States. I have every confidence in them that they will issue it correctly and worthily. It has been the great literary work of my life, and I trust it will be as kindly received in America as in England. I wish for Messrs. Funk success in a venture which must involve a great risk, and much outlay.*"

Dec. 8, 1881. C. H. SPURGEON.

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PREFACE.

It is now three years and a half since we sent out the fourth portion of "The Treasury of David," and many have been the enquiries as to when the fifth volume would appear. Our publishers have given hopeful replies to the outside public, but their own patience has been considerably strained as they have watched our slow progress and bemoaned our long intervals of inactivity. The book is ready at last, very much to the author's content, though he cannot say that he is quite so well satisfied with it as with the former volumes. There is more work in it, but less to show for the labour. Equal diligence has been bestowed upon it, but upon many of the Psalms the materials have been extremely slender, and therefore research has had to go further afield to discover notes and expositions. Where there was much material there was more freedom of selection, and so the extracts were rich and suggestive, but now that the supply is scanty that which we discover after much hunting is not always of the very highest value.

As most of the commentators upon the Psalms proceed in their work they become slovenly, and appear to write hurriedly and think superficially, either because they grow weary of their huge enterprise, or else because they have said their best things already: this makes the compiler's labour the more severe. Another source of the increasing "famine in the land" is the unhappy fact that the lazy practice of referring to a passage in a former psalm is continually carried out by commentators; or, what is rather worse, the writers fall into the habit of repeating, with scarce a variation of language, that which they have said before.

Our greatest trouble is occasioned by the fact that the expounders are not impartial, but spend all their love, or at least

their energies, upon favourite portions of the sacred volume, passing by other passages with scarcely a remark, as if all Scripture were not equally inspired. Why should so much be written on Psalm CXVI. and so little upon CXVIII? Upon here and there a passage everybody seems to have written or spoken, but having passed through these few frequented places we have had to travel along an untrodden road. Of many a text we have had to sigh, "Few there be that find it." We are writing of the Psalms, the best read portion of the Old Testament, and therefore the fact is the more singular. We have thousands of writers, of one kind or another, but they go in flocks, like sheep, traversing only the same texts and passages. For want of a conscientious effort to expound the whole of Scripture, much of it lies as little considered as if it had never been written for our instruction.

Nor is this the only reason for the time which this volume has occupied, though we judge it to be quite sufficient, but we have desired to complete this work at our best, and not to allow the close of it to exhibit signs of fatigue and decline. We have often sat down to write our comment upon a psalm, and have risen from the task because we did not feel at home at it. It is of no use compelling the mind, its productions in such a case are like forced fruits, disappointing and devoid of flavour. We like to write after the manner of John Bunyan, who said, "As I pulled, it came," and we prefer that the pulling should be as gentle as possible. So it has happened that we have lingered for months over a psalm, feeling quite unfit to enter upon it. Especially was this the case over the hundred and ninth psalm, which we sometimes think we never should have been able to handle at all if it had not been for the Bulgarian massacres, which threw us into such a state of righteous indignation that while we were musing the fire burned, and we melted the sentences, and wished that we could pour them boiling hot upon the monsters. Later tidings make us feel that the other side might well be favoured with similar visitations. Other psalms have had their difficulties, though none to be compared with CIX. The grand *Cosmos* of Psalm CIV. was not to be dismissed in a few days; even now, after laying our best efforts at its feet, we feel dissatisfied with the poor result. However, we have done our best, and have grappled honestly with all hard

places. We are so far through our labour and look for a full deliverance. If some of our friends have had to wait, we hope they will be gainers by obtaining fruit all the riper and better from coming in due season.

This volume is shorter than those which preceded it, on account of the interposition of the hundred and nineteenth psalm, which is far too long to be incorporated in this volume. Being also too long to be embodied in the next, it will be attempted by itself, if health and strength permit. Then we may reckon that from the hundred and twentieth to the hundred and fiftieth will make another volume of about the usual size, and so "*The Treasury*" will be completed, if the Lord will, in seven portions. Innumerable thanks which we have received render the continuance of this work a very happy engagement, and feeling ourselves free to take as much time as we please, it will never degenerate into task work, nor will it be executed "by the piece," as too much literary work is evidently done. If we die before it is completed, it will be better to leave an unfinished work executed with care than to make a hurried close with inferior workmanship.

In this volume, as in all the rest, we have had the indefatigable assistance of Mr. J. L. Keys, who, in addition to a vast amount of copying, has visited various libraries and museums to select from rare works which could not be found in any other places. Our venerable friend, the Rev. George Rogers, has all along contributed his invaluable sermon-outlines, for which we are deeply grateful. Mr. Gracey, the classical tutor of the Pastors' College, assisted us through the earlier psalms of this volume in making selections from the Latin authors, and when he was obliged to decline, owing to the pressure of his engagements, his place was ably filled by the Rev. E. T. Gibson, late of Crayford, to whom we also owe certain notes from German authors. The immense mass of work which has been done in translating does not appear in the volume, for only here and there an extract has been selected out of the immense area of Latinity which has had to be traversed. To begin with, many of the voluminous authors are so fanciful as to be frequently ridiculous in their interpretations, and amid acres of words one can hardly find a grain of reasonable comment. Worse still, if worse can be, their translations are not to be relied upon, and

they generally throw the most weight upon the slenderest threads, hanging ponderous teachings upon very doubtful renderings. In addition to all this, the Latin authors, like the English, greatly degenerate as they proceed, and the quotable portions become more and more rare. We have somewhat enlarged upon this point that our readers may see that this smaller volume represents far more labour than any of its predecessors. Driven to the Latin authors by the poverty of the English, we have not used a tenth part of what has been selected.

It has hardly been encouraging to do more work with less apparent result, and yet it must be more useful to give hints for the interpretation of passages which have been neglected than merely to present our readers with what they could easily have found for themselves. Reflecting upon this, we thank God and take courage.

Though frequently interrupted by ill-health, we hope to proceed with our work with all possible diligence, indulging the hope that when the author and compiler shall sleep with his fathers, the libraries of his brethren will remain enriched, and other minds will be assisted in setting forth the infinite fulness of this incomparable portion of the word of God. We cannot but express our sense of the superficiality of the best and most laborious of comments when compared with the bottomless depths of the Sacred Word, nor can we refrain from uttering our growing conviction that the Scriptures possess a verbal as well as a plenary inspiration; indeed, we are quite unable to see how they could have the one without the other. So much of meaning dwells in the turn of an expression, the tense of a verb, or the number of a noun, that we believe in the inspiration of the words themselves; certainly the words are the things *written*, and the only things that can be written—for the refined spirit of a passage is not the creature of pen and ink. Our Lord's favourite sentence, "It is written," must of necessity apply to words, for only words are written. Those *words* which the Holy Ghost teacheth are, however, by no means to be regarded as mere words, for besides their office of conserving the inner meaning, as the shell preserves the mystic germ within the egg, they are themselves spirit and life. From all of them we gather quickening, and they breathe fire into our souls.

May the enlightening Spirit rest upon all students of the

Psalms, and grant them to see far more deeply into the hidden meaning of these sacred hymns than we have been enabled to do. We rise from our perusal of each holy passage abashed at our own short-sightedness, and almost overwhelmed at our temerity in having dared to undertake such a work as we have brought to the present stage. May He who accepteth us according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not, bless our unworthy labours to His own glory, for Christ's sake.

Yours very heartily,

CLAPHAM,
August, 1878.

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PSALM CIV.

GENERAL REMARKS.—*Here we have one of the loftiest and longest sustained flights of the inspired muse. The Psalm gives an interpretation to the many voices of nature, and sings sweetly both of creation and providence. The poem contains a complete* COSMOS: *sea and land, cloud and sunlight, plant and animal, light and darkness, life and death, are all proved to be expressive of the presence of the Lord. Traces of the six days' of creation are very evident, and though the creation of man, which was the crowning work of the sixth day, is not mentioned, this is accounted for from the fact that man is himself the singer: some have even discerned marks of the divine rest upon the seventh day in verse* 31. *It is* a poet's version of Genesis. *Nor is it alone the present condition of the earth which is here the subject of song; but a hint is given of those holier times when we shall see "a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," out of which the sinner shall be consumed, verse* 35. *The spirit of ardent praise to God runs through the whole, and with it a distinct realization of the divine Being as a personal existence, loved and trusted as well as adored.*

We have no information as to the author, but the Septuagint assigns it to David, and we see no reason for ascribing it to any one else. His spirit, style, and manner of writing are very manifest therein, and if the Psalm must be ascribed to another, it must be to a mind remarkably similar, and we could only suggest the wise son of David—Solomon, the poet preacher, to whose notes upon natural history in the Proverbs some of the verses bear a striking likeness. Whoever the human penman may have been, the exceeding glory and perfection of the Holy Spirit's own divine authorship are plain to every spiritual mind.

DIVISION.—*After ascribing blessedness to the Lord the devout Psalmist sings of the light and the firmament, which were the work of the first and second days (verses* 1—6). *By an easy transition he describes the separation of the waters from the dry land, the formation of rain, brooks and rivers, and the uprising of green herbs, which were the produce of the third day* (7—18). *Then the appointment of the sun and moon to be the guardians of day and night commands the poet's admiration* (19—23), *and so he sings the work of the fourth day. Having already alluded to many varieties of living creatures, the psalmist proceeds from verse* 24 *to verse* 30 *to sing of the life with which the Lord was pleased to fill the air, the sea, and the land; these forms of existence were the peculiar produce of the fifth and sixth days. We may regard the closing verses* (31—35) *as a Sabbath meditation, hymn, and prayer. The whole lies before us as a panorama of the universe viewed by the eye of devotion. O for grace to render due praise unto the Lord while reading it.*

EXPOSITION.

BLESS the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great: thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

2 Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

5 *Who* laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as *with* a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

1. "*Bless the* LORD, *O my soul.*" This psalm begins and ends like the Hundred and Third, and it could not do better: when the model is perfect it deserves to exist in duplicate. True praise begins at home. It is idle to stir up others to praise if we are ungratefully silent ourselves. We should call upon our inmost hearts to awake and bestir themselves, for we are apt to be sluggish, and if we are so when called upon to bless God, we shall have great cause to be ashamed. When we magnify the Lord, let us do it heartily: our best is far beneath his worthiness, let us not dishonour him by rendering to him half-hearted worship. "*O* LORD *my God, thou art very great.*" This ascription has in it a remarkable blending of the boldness of faith, and the awe of holy fear: for the psalmist calls the infinite Jehovah "*my God,*" and at the same time, prostrate in amazement at the divine greatness, he cries out in utter astonishment, "*Thou art very great.*" God was great on Sinai, yet the opening words of his law were, "I am the Lord thy God;" his greatness is no reason why faith should not put in her claim, and call him all her own. The declaration of Jehovah's greatness here given would have been very much in place at the end of the psalm, for it is a natural inference and deduction from a survey of the universe: its position at the very commencement of the poem is an indication that the whole psalm was well considered and digested in the mind before it was actually put into words; only on this supposition can we account for the emotion preceding the contemplation. Observe also, that the wonder expressed does not refer to the creation and its greatness, but to Jehovah himself. It is not "the universe is very great!" but "THOU art very great." Many stay at the creature, and so become idolatrous in spirit; to pass onward to the Creator himself is true wisdom. "*Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*" Thou thyself art not to be seen, but thy works, which may be called thy garments, are full of beauties and marvels which redound to thine honour. Garments both conceal and reveal a man, and so do the creatures of God. The Lord is seen in his works as worthy of *honour* for his skill, his goodness, and his power, and as claiming *majesty*, for he has fashioned all things in sovereignty, doing as he wills, and asking no man's permit. He must be blind indeed who does not see that nature is the work of a king. These are solemn strokes of God's severer mind, terrible touches of his sterner attributes, broad lines of inscrutable mystery, and deep shadings of overwhelming power, and these make creation's picture a problem never to be solved, except by admitting that he who drew it giveth no account of his matters, but ruleth all things according to the good pleasure of his will. His *majesty* is, however, always so displayed as to reflect *honour* upon his whole character; he does as he wills, but he wills only that which is thrice holy, like himself. The very robes of the unseen Spirit teach us this, and it is ours to recognize it with humble adoration.

2. "*Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment:*" wrapping the light about him as a monarch puts on his robe. The conception is sublime: but it makes us feel how altogether inconceivable the personal glory of the Lord must be; if light itself is but his garment and veil, what must be the blazing splendour of his own essential being! We are lost in astonishment, and dare not pry into the mystery lest we be blinded by its insufferable glory. "*Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain*"—within which he might dwell. Light was created on the first day and the firmament upon the second, so that they fitly follow each other in this verse. Oriental princes put on their glorious apparel and then sit in state within curtains, and the Lord is spoken of under that image: but how far above all comprehension the figure must be lifted, since the robe is essential light, to which suns and moons owe their brightness, and the curtain is the azure sky studded with stars for gems. This is a substantial argument for the truth with which the psalmist commenced his song, "O Lord my God, thou art very great."

3. "*Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters.*" His lofty halls are framed with the waters which are above the firmament. The upper rooms of God's great house, the secret stories far above our ken, the palatial chambers

wherein he resides, are based upon the floods which form the upper ocean. To the unsubstantial he lends stability; he needs no joists and rafters, for his palace is sustained by his own power. We are not to interpret literally where the language is poetical, it would be simple absurdity to do so. "*Who maketh the clouds his chariot.*" When he comes forth from his secret pavilion 'tis thus he makes his royal progress. "His chariot of wrath deep thunder-clouds form," and his chariot of mercy drops plenty as it traverses the celestial road. "*Who walketh* [or rather *goes*] *upon the wings of the wind.*" With the clouds for a car, and the winds for winged steeds, the Great King hastens on his movements whether for mercy or for judgment. Thus we have the idea of a king still further elaborated—his lofty palace, his chariot, and his coursers are before us; but what a palace must we imagine, whose beams are of crystal, and whose base is consolidated vapour! What a stately car is that which is fashioned out of the flying clouds, whose gorgeous colours Solomon in all his glory could not rival; and what a Godlike progress is that in which spirit wings and breath of winds bear up the moving throne. "O Lord, my God, thou art very great!"

4. "*Who maketh his angels spirits;*" or *winds*, for the word means either. Angels are pure spirits, though they are permitted to assume a visible form when God desires us to see them. God is a spirit, and he is waited upon by spirits in his royal courts. Angels are like winds for mystery, force, and invisibility, and no doubt the winds themselves are often the angels or messengers of God. God who makes his angels to be as winds, can also make winds to be his angels, and they are constantly so in the economy of nature. "*His ministers a flaming fire.*" Here, too, we may choose which we will of two meanings: God's ministers or servants he makes to be as swift, potent, and terrible as fire, and on the other hand he makes fire, that devouring element, to be his minister flaming forth upon his errands. That the passage refers to angels is clear from Heb. i. 7; and it was most proper to mention them here in connection with light and the heavens, and immediately after the robes and palace of the Great King. Should not the retinue of the Lord of Hosts be mentioned as well as his chariot? It would have been a flaw in the description of the universe had the angels not been alluded to, and this is the most appropriate place for their introduction. When we think of the extraordinary powers entrusted to angelic beings, and the mysterious glory of the seraphim and the four living creatures, we are led to reflect upon the glory of the Master whom they serve, and again we cry out with the psalmist, "O Lord, my God, thou art very great."

5. "*Who laid the foundations of the earth.*" Thus the commencement of creation is described, in almost the very words employed by the Lord himself in Job xxxviii. 4. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, and who laid the corner stone thereof?" And the words are found in the same connection too, for the Lord proceeds to say, "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." "*That it should not be removed for ever.*" The language is, of course, poetical, but the fact is none the less wonderful: the earth is so placed in space that it remains as stable as if it were a fixture. The several motions of our planet are carried on so noiselessly and evenly that, as far as we are concerned, all things are as permanent and peaceful as if the old notion of its resting upon pillars were literally true. With what delicacy has the great Artificer poised our globe! What power must there be in that hand which has caused so vast a body to know its orbit, and to move so smoothly in it! What engineer can save every part of his machinery from an occasional jar, jerk, or friction? yet to our great world in its complicated motions no such thing has ever occurred. "O Lord, my God, thou art very great."

6. "*Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment.*" The new-born earth was wrapt in aqueous swaddling bands. In the first ages, ere man appeared, the proud waters ruled the whole earth, "*the waters stood above the mountains,*" no dry land was visible, vapour as from a steaming cauldron

covered all. Geologists inform us of this as a discovery, but the Holy Spirit had revealed the fact long before. The passage before us shows us the Creator commencing his work, and laying the foundation for future order and beauty: to think of this reverently will fill us with adoration; to conceive of it grossly and carnally would be highly blasphemous.

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills.

11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.

16 The trees of the LORD are full *of sap;* the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

17 Where the birds make their nests: *as for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.

18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies.

7. "*At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.*" When the waters and vapours covered all, the Lord had but to speak and they disappeared at once. As though they had been intelligent agents the waves hurried to their appointed deeps and left the land to itself; then the mountains lifted their heads, the high lands rose from the main, and at length continents and islands, slopes and plains were left to form the habitable earth. The voice of the Lord effected this great marvel. Is not his word equal to every emergency? potent enough to work the greatest miracle? By that same word shall the waterfloods of trouble be restrained, and the raging billows of sin be rebuked: the day cometh when at the thunder of Jehovah's voice all the proud waters of evil shall utterly haste away. "O Lord, my God, thou art very great."

8. The vanquished waters are henceforth obedient. "*They go up by the mountains,*" climbing in the form of clouds even to the summits of the Alps. "*They go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them:*" they are as willing to descend in rain, and brooks, and torrents as they were eager to ascend in mists. The loyalty of the mighty waters to the laws of their God is most notable; the fierce flood, the boisterous rapid; the tremendous torrent, are only forms of that gentle dew which trembles on the tiny blade of grass, and in those ruder shapes they are equally obedient to the laws which their Maker has impressed upon them. Not so much as a solitary

particle of spray ever breaks rank, or violates the command of the Lord of sea and land, neither do the awful cataracts and terrific floods revolt from his sway. It is very beautiful among the mountains to see the divine system of water supply—the rising of the fleecy vapours, the distillation of the pure fluid, the glee with which the new-born element leaps adown the crags to reach the rivers, and the strong eagerness with which the rivers seek the ocean, their appointed place.

9. "*Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.*" That bound has once been passed, but it shall never be so again. The deluge was caused by the suspension of the divine mandate which held the floods in check: they knew their old supremacy, and hastened to reassert it, but now the covenant promise for ever prevents a return of that carnival of waters, that revolt of the waves: ought we not rather to call it that impetuous rush of the indignant floods to avenge the injured honour of their King, whom men had offended? Jehovah's word bounds the ocean, using only a narrow belt of sand to confine it to its own limits: that apparently feeble restraint answers every purpose, for the sea is obedient as a little child to the bidding of its Maker. Destruction lies asleep in the bed of the ocean, and though our sins might well arouse it, yet are its bands made strong by covenant mercy, so that it cannot break loose again upon the guilty sons of men.

10. "*He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.*" This is a beautiful part of the Lord's arrangement of the subject waters: they find vents through which they leap into liberty where their presence will be beneficial in the highest degree. Depressions exist in the sides of the mountains, and adown these the waterbrooks are made to flow, often taking their rise at bubbling fountains which issue from the bowels of the earth. It is God who sends these springs even as a gardener makes the water courses, and turns the current with his foot. When the waters are confined in the abyss *the Lord* sets their bound, and when they sport at liberty *he* sends them forth.

11. "*They give drink to every beast of the field.*" Who else would water them if the Lord did not? They are *his* cattle, and therefore he leads them forth to watering. Not one of them is forgotten of him. "*The wild asses quench their thirst.*" The good Lord gives them enough and to spare. They know their Master's crib. Though bit or bridle of man they will not brook, and man denounces them as unteachable, they learn of the Lord, and know better far than man where flows the cooling crystal of which they must drink or die. They are only asses, and wild, yet our heavenly Father careth for them. Will he not also care for us? We see here, also, that nothing is made in vain: though no human lip is moistened by the brooklet in the lone valley, yet are there other creatures which need refreshment, and these slake their thirst at the stream. Is this nothing? Must everything exist for man, or else be wasted? What but our pride and selfishness could have suggested such a notion? It is not true that flowers which blush unseen by human eye are wasting their sweetness, for the bee finds them out, and other winged wanderers live on their luscious juices. Man is but one creature of the many whom the heavenly Father feedeth and watereth.

12. "*By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.*" How refreshing are these words! What happy memories they arouse of plashing waterfalls and entangled boughs, where the merry din of the falling and rushing water forms a sort of solid background of music, and the sweet tuneful notes of the birds are the brighter and more flashing lights in the harmony. Pretty birdies, sing on! What better can ye do, and who can do it better? When we too drink of the river of God, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life, it well becomes us to "sing among the branches." Where ye dwell ye sing; and shall not we rejoice in the Lord, who has been our dwelling-place in all generations. As ye fly from bough to bough, ye warble forth your notes, and so will we as we flit through time into eternity. It is not meet that birds of Paradise should be outdone by birds of earth.

13. "*He watereth the hills from his chambers.*" As the mountains are too high to be watered by rivers and brooks, the Lord himself refreshes them from those waters above the firmament which the poet had in a former verse described as the upper chambers of heaven. Clouds are detained among the mountain crags, and deluge the hill sides with fertilizing rain. Where man cannot reach the Lord can, whom none else can water with grace he can, and where all stores of refreshment fail he can supply all that is needed from his own halls. "*The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.*" The result of the divine working is fulness everywhere, the soil is saturated with rain, the seed germinates, the beasts drink, and the birds sing—nothing is left unsupplied. So, too, is it in the new creation, he giveth more grace, he fills his people with good, and makes them all confess, "of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace."

14. "*He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man.*" Grass grows as well as herbs, for cattle must be fed as well as men. God appoints to the lowliest creature its portion and takes care that it has it. Divine power is as truly and as worthily put forth in the feeding of beasts as in the nurturing of man; watch but a blade of grass with a devout eye and you may see God at work within it. The herb is for man, and he must till the soil, or it will not be produced, yet it is God that causeth it to grow in the garden, even the same God who made the grass to grow in the unenclosed pastures of the wilderness. Man forgets this and talks of his produce, but in very truth without God he would plough and sow in vain. The Lord causeth each green blade to spring and each ear to ripen; do but watch with opened eye and you shall see the Lord walking through the cornfields. "*That he may bring forth food out of the earth.*" Both grass for cattle and corn for man are food brought forth out of the earth, and they are signs that it was God's design that the very dust beneath our feet, which seems better adapted to bury us than to sustain us, should actually be transformed into the staff of life. The more we think of this the more wonderful it will appear. How great is that God who from among the sepulchres finds the support of life, and out of the ground which was cursed brings forth the blessings of corn and wine and oil.

15. "*And wine that maketh glad the heart of man.*" By the aid of genial showers the earth produces not merely necessaries but luxuries, that which furnishes a feast as well as that which makes a meal. O that man were wise enough to know how to use this gladdening product of the vine; but, alas, he full often turns it to ill account, and debases himself therewith. Of this he must himself bear the blame; he deserves to be miserable who turns even blessings into curses. "*And oil to make his face to shine.*" The easterns use oil more than we do, and probably are wiser in this respect than we are: they delight in anointings with perfumed oils, and regard the shining of the face as a choice emblem of joy. God is to be praised for all the products of the soil, not one of which could come to us were it not that he causeth it to grow. "*And bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*" Men have more courage after they are fed: many a depressed spirit has been comforted by a good substantial meal. We ought to bless God for strength of heart as well as force of limb, since if we possess them they are both the bounties of his kindness.

16. The watering of the hills not only produces the grass and the cultivated herbs, but also the nobler species of vegetation, which come not within the range of human culture:—

> "Their veins with genial moisture fed,
> Jehovah's forests lift the head:
> Nor other than his fostering hand
> Thy cedars, Lebanon, demand."

"*The trees of the* LORD"—the greatest, noblest, and most royal of trees; those too which are unowned of man, and untouched by his hand. "*Are full of sap,*" or are full, well supplied, richly watered, so that they become, as the cedars, full of resin, flowing with life, and verdant all the year round. "*The*

cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted." They grow where none ever thought of planting them, where for ages they were unobserved, and where at this moment they are too gigantic for man to prune them. What would our psalmist have said to some of the trees in the Yosemite valley? Truly these are worthy to be called the trees of the Lord, for towering stature and enormous girth. Thus is the care of God seen to be effectual and all-sufficient. If trees uncared for by man are yet so full of sap, we may rest assured that the people of God who by faith live upon the Lord alone shall be equally well sustained. Planted by grace, and owing all to our heavenly Father's care, we may defy the hurricane, and laugh at the fear of drought, for none that trust in him shall ever be left unwatered.

17. "*Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.*" So far from being in need, these trees of God afford shelter to others, birds small and great make their nests in the branches. Thus what they receive from the great Lord they endeavour to return to his weaker creatures. How one thing fits into another in this fair creation, each link drawing on its fellow: the rains water the fir trees, and the fir trees become the happy home of birds; thus do the thunder clouds build the sparrow's house, and the descending rain sustains the basis of the stork's nest. Observe, also, how everything has its use—the boughs furnish a home for the birds; and every living thing has its accommodation—the stork finds a house in the pines. Her nest is called a house, because this bird exhibits domestic virtues and maternal love which make her young to be comparable to a family. No doubt this ancient writer had seen storks' nests in fir trees; they appear usually to build on houses and ruins, but there is also evidence that where there are forests they are content with pine trees. Has the reader ever walked through a forest of great trees and felt the awe which strikes the heart in nature's sublime cathedral? Then he will remember to have felt that each bird was holy, since it dwelt amid such sacred solitude. Those who cannot see or hear of God except in Gothic edifices, amid the swell of organs, and the voices of a surpliced choir, will not be able to enter into the feeling which makes the simple, unsophisticated soul hear "the voice of the Lord God walking among the trees."

18. "*The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.*" All places teem with life. We call our cities populous, but are not the forests and the high hills more densely peopled with life? We speak of uninhabitable places, but where are they? The chamois leaps from crag to crag, and the rabbit burrows beneath the soil. For one creature the loftiness of the hills, and for another the hollowness of the rocks, serves as a protection:—

> "Far o'er the crags the wild goats roam,
> The rocks supply the coney's home."

Thus all the earth is full of happy life, every place has its appropriate inhabitant, nothing is empty and void and waste. See how goats, and storks, and conies, and sparrows, each contribute a verse to the psalm of nature; have we not also our canticles to sing unto the Lord? Little though we may be in the scale of importance, yet let us fill our sphere, and so honour the Lord who made us with a purpose.

19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

19. The appointed rule of the great lights is now the theme for praise. The moon is mentioned first, because in the Jewish day the night leads the way. "*He appointed the moon for seasons.*" By the waxing and waning of the moon the year is divided into months, and weeks, and by this means the exact dates of the holy days were arranged. Thus the lamp of night is made to be of service to man, and in fixing the period of religious assemblies (as it did among the Jews) it enters into connection with his noblest being. Never let us regard the moon's motions as the inevitable result of inanimate impersonal law, but as the appointment of our God. "*The sun knoweth his going down.*" In finely poetic imagery the sun is represented as knowing when to retire from sight, and sink below the horizon. He never loiters on his way, or pauses as if undecided when to descend; his appointed hour for going down, although it is constantly varying, he always keeps to a second. *We* need to be aroused in the morning, but he arises punctually, and though some require to watch the clock to know the hour of rest, he, without a timepiece to consult, hides himself in the western sky the instant the set time has come. For all this man should praise the Lord of the sun and moon, who has made these great lights to be our chronometers, and thus keeps our world in order, and suffers no confusion to distract us.

20. "*Thou makest darkness, and it is night.*" Drawing down the blinds for us, he prepares our bedchamber that we may sleep. Were there no darkness we should sigh for it, since we should find repose so much more difficult, if the weary day were never calmed into night. Let us see God's hand in the veiling of the sun, and never fear either natural or providential darkness, since both are of the Lord's own making. "*Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.*" Then is the lion's day, his time to hunt his food. Why should not the wild beast have his hour as well as man? He has a service to perform, should he not also have his food? Darkness is fitter for beasts than man; and those men are most brutish who love darkness rather than light. When the darkness of ignorance broods over a nation, then all sorts of superstitions, cruelties, and vices abound; the gospel, like the sunrising, soon clears the world of the open ravages of these monsters, and they seek more congenial abodes. We see here the value of true light, for we may depend upon it where there is night there will also be wild beasts to kill and to devour.

21. "*The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.*" This is the poetic interpretation of a roar. To whom do the lions roar? Certainly not to their prey, for the terrible sound tends to alarm their victims, and drive them away. They after their own fashion express their desires for food, and the expression of desire is a kind of prayer. Out of this fact comes the devout thought of the wild beast's appealing to its Maker for food. But neither with lions nor men will the seeking of prayer suffice, there must be practical seeking too, and the lions are well aware of it. What they have in their own language asked for they go forth to seek; being in this thing far wiser than many men who offer formal prayers not half so earnest as those of the young lions, and then neglect the means in the use of which the object of their petitions might be gained. The lions roar and seek; too many are liars before God, and roar but never seek.

How comforting is the thought that the Spirit translates the voice of a lion, and finds it to be a seeking of meat from God! May we not hope that our poor broken cries and groans, which in our sorrow we have called "the voice of our roaring" (Ps. xxii. 10), will be understood by him, and interpreted in our favour. Evidently he considers the meaning rather than the music of the utterance, and puts the best construction upon it.

22. "*The sun ariseth.*" Every evening has its morning to make the day. Were it not that we have seen the sun rise so often we should think it the

greatest of miracles, and the most amazing of blessings. "*They gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.*" Thus they are out of man's way, and he seldom encounters them unless he desires to do so. The forest's warriors retire to their quarters when the morning's drum is heard, finding in the recesses of their dens a darkness suitable for their slumbers; there they lay them down and digest their food, for God has allotted even to them their portion of rest and enjoyment. There was one who in this respect was poorer than lions and foxes, for he had not where to lay his head: all were provided for except their incarnate Provider. Blessed Lord, thou hast stooped beneath the conditions of the brutes to lift up worse than brutish men!

It is very striking how the Lord controls the fiercest of animals far more readily than the shepherd manages his sheep. At nightfall they separate and go forth each one upon the merciful errand of ending the miseries of the sickly and decrepit among grass-eating animals. The younger of these animals being swift of foot easily escape them and are benefited by the exercise, and for the most part only those are overtaken and killed to whom life would have been protracted agony. So far lions are messengers of mercy, and are as much sent of God as the sporting dog is sent by man on his errands. But these mighty hunters must not always be abroad, they must be sent back to their lairs when man comes upon the scene. Who shall gather these ferocious creatures and shut them in? Who shall chain them down and make them harmless? The sun suffices to do it. He is the true lion-tamer. They gather themselves together as though they were so many sheep, and in their own retreats they keep themselves prisoners till returning darkness gives them another leave to range. By simply majestic means the divine purposes are accomplished. In like manner even the devils are subject unto our Lord Jesus, and by the simple spread of the light of the gospel these roaring demons are chased out of the world. No need for miracles or displays of physical power, the Sun of Righteousness arises, and the devil and the false gods, and superstitions and errors of men, all seek their hiding places in the dark places of the earth among the moles and the bats.

23. "*Man goeth forth.*" It is his turn now, and the sunrise has made things ready for him. His warm couch he forsakes and the comforts of home, to find his daily food; this work is good for him, both keeping him out of mischief, and exercising his faculties. "*Unto his work and to his labour until the evening.*" He goes not forth to sport but to work, not to loiter but to labour; at least, this is the lot of the best part of mankind. We are made for work and ought to work, and should never grumble that so it is appointed. The hours of labour, however, ought not to be too long. If labour lasts out the average daylight it is certainly all that any man ought to expect of another, and yet there are poor creatures so badly paid that in twelve hours they cannot earn bread enough to keep them from hunger. Shame on those who dare so impose upon helpless women and children. Night work should also be avoided as much as possible. There are twelve hours in which a man ought to work: the night is meant for rest and sleep.

Night, then, as well as day has its voice of praise. It is more soft and hushed, but it is none the less true. The moon lights up a solemn silence of worship among the fir trees, through which the night wind softly breathes its "songs without words." Every now and then a sound is heard, which, however simple by day, sounds among the shadows startling and weird-like, as if the presence of the unknown had filled the heart with trembling, and made the influence of the Infinite to be realized. Imagination awakens herself; unbelief finds the silence and the solemnity uncongenial, faith looks up to the skies above her and sees heavenly things all the more clearly in the absence of the sunlight, and adoration bows itself before the Great Invisible! There are spirits that keep the night watches, and the spell of their presence has been felt by many a wanderer in the solitudes of nature: God also himself is abroad all

night long, and the glory which concealeth is often felt to be even greater than that which reveals. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

25 *So is* this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships: *there is* that leviathan, *whom* thou hast made to play therein.

27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.

28 *That* thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

24. "*O* LORD, *how manifold are thy works.*" They are not only many for number but manifold for variety. Mineral, vegetable, animal—what a range of works is suggested by these three names! No two even of the same class are exactly alike, and the classes are more numerous than science can number. Works in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, works which abide the ages, works which come to perfection and pass away in a year, works which with all their beauty do not outlive a day, works within works, and works within these—who can number one of a thousand? God is the great worker, and ordainer of variety. It is ours to study his works, for they are great, and sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. The kingdom of grace contains as manifold and as great works as that of nature, but the chosen of the Lord alone discern them. "*In wisdom hast thou made them all,*" or *wrought* them all. They are all his works, wrought by his own power, and they all display his wisdom. It was wise to make them—none could be spared; every link is essential to the chain of nature—wild beasts as much as men, poisons as truly as odoriferous herbs. They are wisely made—each one fits its place, fills it, and is happy in so doing. As a whole, the "all" of creation is a wise achievement, and however it may be chequered with mysteries, and clouded with terrors, it all works together for good, and as one complete harmonious piece of workmanship it answers the great Worker's end. "*The earth is full of thy riches.*" It is not a poor-house, but a palace; not a hungry ruin, but a well-filled store-house. The Creator has not set his creatures down in a dwelling-place where the table is bare, and the buttery empty, he has filled the earth with food; and not with bare necessaries only, but with *riches*—dainties, luxuries, beauties, treasures. In the bowels of the earth are hidden mines of wealth, and on her surface are teeming harvests of plenty. All these riches are the Lord's; we ought to call them not "the wealth of nations," but "thy riches" O Lord! Not in one clime alone are these riches of God to be found, but in all lands—even the Arctic ocean has its precious things which men endure much hardness to win, and the burning sun of the equator ripens a produce which flavours the food of all mankind. If his house below is so full of riches what must his house above be, where

> "The very streets are paved with gold
> Exceeding clear and fine"?

25. "*So is this great and wide sea.*" He gives an instance of the immense number and variety of Jehovah's works by pointing to the sea. "Look," saith he, "at yonder ocean, stretching itself on both hands and embracing so many

lands, it too swarms with animal life, and in its deeps lie treasures beyond all counting. The heathen made the sea a different province from the land, and gave the command thereof to Neptune, but we know of a surety that Jehovah rules the waves. "*Wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts;*" read *moving things and animals small and great*, and you have the true sense. The number of minute forms of animal life is indeed beyond all reckoning: when a single phosphorescent wave may bear millions of infusoria, and around a fragment of rock armies of microscopic beings may gather, we renounce all idea of applying arithmetic to such a case. The sea in many regions appears to be all alive, as if every drop were a world. Nor are these tiny creatures the only tenants of the sea, for it contains gigantic mammals which exceed in bulk those which range the land, and a vast host of huge fishes which wander among the waves, and hide in the caverns of the sea as the tiger lurks in the jungle, or the lion roams the plain. Truly, O Lord, thou makest the sea to be as rich in the works of thy hands as the land itself.

26. "*There go the ships.*" So that ocean is not altogether deserted of mankind. It is the highway of nations, and unites, rather than divides, distant lands. "*There is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.*" The huge whale turns the sea into his recreation ground, and disports himself as God designed that he should do. The thought of this amazing creature caused the psalmist to adore the mighty Creator who created him, formed him for his place and made him happy in it. Our ancient maps generally depict a ship and whale upon the sea, and so show that it is most natural, as well as poetical, to connect them both with the mention of the ocean.

27. "*These wait all upon thee.*" They come around thee as fowls around the farmer's door at the time for feeding, and look up with expectation. Men or marmots, eagles or emmets, whales or minnows, they alike rely upon thy care. "*That thou mayest give them meat in due season;*" that is to say, when they need it and when it is ready for them. God has a time for all things, and does not feed his creatures by fits and starts; he gives them daily bread, and a quantity proportioned to their needs. This is all that any of us should expect; if even the brute creatures are content with a sufficiency we ought not to be more greedy than they.

28. "*That thou givest them they gather.*" God gives it, but they must gather it, and they are glad that he does so, for otherwise their gathering would be in vain. We often forget that animals and birds in their free life have to work to obtain food even as we do; and yet it is true with them as with us that our heavenly Father feeds all. When we see the chickens picking up the corn which the housewife scatters from her lap we have an apt illustration of the manner in which the Lord supplies the needs of all living things—he gives and they gather. "*Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.*" Here is divine liberality with its open hand filling needy creatures till they want no more: and here is divine omnipotence feeding a world by simply opening its hand. What should we do if that hand were closed? there would be no need to strike a blow, the mere closing of it would produce death by famine. Let us praise the open-handed Lord, whose providence and grace satisfy our mouths with good things.

29. "*Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled.*" So dependent are all living things upon God's smile, that a frown fills them with terror, as though convulsed with anguish. This is so in the natural world, and certainly not less so in the spiritual: saints when the Lord hides his face are in terrible perplexity. "*Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.*" The breath appears to be a trifling matter, and the air an impalpable substance of but small importance, yet, once withdrawn, the body loses all vitality, and crumbles back to the earth from which it was originally taken. All animals come under this law, and even the dwellers in the sea are not exempt from it. Thus dependent is all nature upon the will of the Eternal. Note here that death is caused by the act of God, "*thou takest* away their breath"; we are immortal

till he bids us die, and so are even the little sparrows, who fall not to the ground without our Father.

30. "*Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*" The loss of their breath destroys them, and by Jehovah's breath a new race is created. The works of the Lord are majestically simple, and are performed with royal ease—a breath creates, and its withdrawal destroys. If we read the word *spirit* as we have it in our version, it is also instructive, for we see the Divine Spirit going forth to create life in nature even as we see him in the realms of grace. At the flood the world was stripped of almost all life, yet how soon the power of God refilled the desolate places! In winter the earth falls into a sleep which makes her appear worn and old, but how readily does the Lord awaken her with the voice of spring, and make her put on anew the beauty of her youth. Thou, Lord, doest all things, and let glory be unto thy name.

31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

31. "*The glory of the* LORD *shall endure forever.*" His works may pass away, but not his glory. Were it only for what he has already done, the Lord deserves to be praised without ceasing. His personal being and character ensure that he would be glorious even were all the creatures dead. "*The* LORD *shall rejoice in his works.*" He did so at the first, when he rested on the seventh day, and saw that everything was very good; he does so still in a measure where beauty and purity in nature still survive the Fall, and he will do so yet more fully when the earth is renovated, and the trail of the serpent is cleansed from the globe. This verse is written in the most glowing manner. The poet finds his heart gladdened by beholding the works of the Lord, and he feels that the Creator himself must have felt unspeakable delight in exercising so much wisdom, goodness, and power.

32. "*He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth.*" The Lord who has graciously displayed his power in acts and works of goodness might, if he had seen fit, have overwhelmed us with the terrors of destruction, for even at a glance of his eye the solid earth rocks with fear. "*He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*" Sinai was altogether on a smoke when the Lord descended upon it. It was but a touch, but it sufficed to make the mountain dissolve in flame. Even our God is a consuming fire. Woe unto those who shall provoke him to frown upon them, they shall perish at the touch of his hand. If sinners were not altogether insensible a glance of the Lord's eye would make them tremble, and the touches of his hand in affliction would set their hearts on fire with repentance. "Of reason all things show some sign," except man's unfeeling heart.

33. "*I will sing unto the* LORD *as long as I live,*" or, literally, *in my lives.* Here and hereafter the psalmist would continue to praise the Lord, for the theme is an endless one, and remains for ever fresh and new. The birds sang God's praises before men were created, but redeemed men will sing his glories when the birds are no more. Jehovah, who ever lives and makes us to live

shall be for ever exalted, and extolled in the songs of redeemed men. "*I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.*" A resolve both happy for himself and glorifying to the Lord. Note the sweet title—*my God.* We never sing so well as when we know that we have an interest in the good things of which we sing, and a relationship to the God whom we praise.

34. "*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*" Sweet both to him and to me. I shall be delighted thus to survey his works and think of his person, and he will graciously accept my notes of praise. Meditation is the soul of religion. It is the tree of life in the midst of the garden of piety, and very refreshing is its fruit to the soul which feeds thereon. And as it is good towards man, so is it towards God. As the fat of the sacrifice was the Lord's portion, so are our best meditations due to the Most High and are most acceptable to him. We ought, therefore, both for our own good and for the Lord's honour to be much occupied with meditation, and that meditation should chiefly dwell upon the Lord himself: it should be "meditation *of him.*" For want of it much communion is lost and much happiness is missed. "*I will be glad in the* LORD." To the meditative mind every thought of God is full of joy. Each one of the divine attributes is a well-spring of delight now that in Christ Jesus we are reconciled unto God.

35. "*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.*" They are the only blot upon creation.

> "Every prospect pleases,
> And only man is vile."

In holy indignation the psalmist would fain rid the world of beings so base as not to love their gracious Creator, so blind as to rebel against their Benefactor. He does but ask for that which just men look forward to as the end of history: for the day is eminently to be desired when in all God's kingdom there shall not remain a single traitor or rebel. The Christian way of putting it will be to ask that grace may turn sinners into saints, and win the wicked to the ways of truth. "*Bless thou the* LORD, *O my soul.*" Here is the end of the matter—whatever sinners may do, do thou, my soul, stand to thy colours, and be true to thy calling. Their silence must not silence thee, but rather provoke thee to redoubled praise to make up for their failures. Nor canst thou alone accomplish the work; others must come to thy help. O ye saints, "*Praise ye the* LORD." Let your hearts cry HALLELUJAH,—for that is the word in the Hebrew. Heavenly word! Let it close the Psalm: for what more remains to be said or written? HALLELUJAH. *Praise ye the Lord.*

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—This psalm is an inspired "Oratorio of Creation."—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Whole Psalm.—The Psalm is delightful, sweet, and instructive, as teaching us the soundest views of nature (la mas sana fisica), and the best method of pursuing the study of it, viz., by admiring with one eye the works of God, and with the other God himself, their Creator and Preserver.—*Sanchez, quoted by Perowne.*

Whole Psalm.—It might almost be said that this one psalm represents the image of the whole Cosmos. We are astonished to find in a lyrical poem of such a limited compass, the whole universe—the heavens and the earth—sketched with a few bold touches. The calm and toilsome labour of man, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, when his daily work is done, is here contrasted with the moving life of the elements of nature. This contrast and generalisation in the conception of the mutual action of natural phenomena, and this retrospection of an omnipresent invisible power, which can renew the earth or crumble it to dust, constitute a solemn and exalted

rather than a glowing and gentle form of poetic creation.—*A. Von Humboldt's Cosmos.*

Whole Psalm.—Its touches are indeed few, rapid—but how comprehensive and sublime! Is it God?—"He is clothed with light as with a garment," and when he walks abroad, it is on the "wings of the wind." The winds or lightnings?—They are his messengers or angels: "Stop us not," they seem to say; "the King's business requireth haste." The waters?—The poet shows them in flood, covering the face of the earth, and then as they now lie, enclosed within their embankments, to break forth no more for ever. The springs?—He traces them, by one inspired glance, as they run among the hills, as they give drink to the wild and lonely creatures of the wilderness, as they nourish the boughs, on which sing the birds, the grass, on which feed the cattle, the herb, the corn, the olive-tree, the vine, which fill man's mouth, cheer his heart, and make his face to shine. Then he skims with bold wing all lofty objects—the trees of the Lord on Lebanon, "full of sap,"—the fir-trees, and the storks which are upon them—the high hills, with their wild goats—and the rocks with their conies. Then he soars up to the heavenly bodies—the sun and the moon. Then he spreads abroad his wings in the darkness of the night, which "hideth not from Him," and hears the beasts of the forest creeping abroad to seek their prey, and the roar of the lions to God for meat, coming up upon the wings of midnight. Then as he sees the shades and the wild beasts fleeing together, in emulous haste, from the presence of the morning sun, and man, strong and calm in its light as in the smile of God, hieing to his labour, he exclaims, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all!" He casts, next, one look at the ocean—a look glancing at the ships which go there, at the leviathan which plays there; and then piercing down to the innumberable creatures, small and great, which are found below its unlifted veil of waters. He sees, then, all the beings, peopling alike earth and sea, waiting for life and food around the table of their Divine Master—nor waiting in vain—till, lo! he hides his face, and they are troubled, die, and disappear in chaos and night. A gleam, next, of the great resurrection of nature and of man comes across his eye. "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth." But a greater truth still succeeds, and forms the climax of the psalm—(a truth Humboldt, with all his admiration of it, notices not, and which gives a Christian tone to the whole)—"*The Lord shall rejoice in his works.*" He contemplates a yet more perfect Cosmos. He is "to consume sinners" and sin "out of" this fair universe: and then, when man is wholly worthy of his dwelling, shall God say of both it and him, with a yet deeper emphasis than when he said it at first, and smiling at the same time a yet warmer and softer smile, "It is very good." And with an ascription of blessing to the Lord does the poet close this almost angelic descant upon the works of nature, the glory of God, and the prospects of man. It is not merely the unity of the Cosmos that he had displayed in it, but its progression, as connected with the parallel progress of man—its thorough dependence on one Infinite Mind—the "increasing purpose" which runs along it—and its final purification, when it shall blossom into "the bright consummate flower" of the new heavens and the new earth, "wherein dwelleth righteousness;"—this is the real burden and the peculiar glory of the 104th Psalm.—*George Gilfillan, in "The Bards of the Bible."*

Whole Psalm.—It is a singular circumstance in the composition of this psalm, that each of the parts of the First Semichorus, after the first, begins with a participle. And these participles are accusatives, agreeing with יְהוָה, the object of the verb בָּרְכִי, at the beginning of the whole psalm. Bless the Jehovah—putting on—extending—laying—constituting—travelling—making—setting—sending—watering—making—making. Thus, this transitive verb, in the opening of the psalm, extending its government through the successive parts of the same semichorus, except the last, unites them all in one long period.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Whole Psalm.—As to the details,—the sections intervening between verses 2 and 31,—they may be read as a meditation upon creation and the first "ordering of the world," as itself the counterpart and foreshadowing of the new and restored order in the great Sabbath or Millenary period, or, it may be, they are actually descriptive of this—beginning with the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven (verse 3 with Ps. xviii. 9—11), attended with "the angels of his power" (verse 4 with 2 Thess. i. 7, *Gr.*) : followed by the "establishing" of the earth, no more to be "moved" or "agitated" by the convulsions and disturbances which sin has caused : after which Nature is exhibited in the perfection of her beauty—all things answering the end of their creation : all the orders of the animal world in harmony with each other, and all at peace with man : all provided for by the varied produce of the earth, no longer cursed, but blessed, and again made fruitful by God, "on whom all wait . . . who openeth his hand and fills them with good" ; and all his goodness meeting with its due acknowledgment from his creatures, who join in chorus to praise him, and say—"O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! In wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches. Hallelujah."—*William De Burgh.*

Verse 1.—"*Bless the* LORD, *O my soul.*" A good man's work lieth most within doors, he is more taken up with his own soul, than with all the world besides ; neither can he ever be alone so long as he hath God and his own heart to converse with.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—With what reverence and holy awe doth the psalmist begin his meditation with that acknowledgment ! "*O* LORD, *my God, thou art very great ;*" and it is the joy of the saints that he who is their God is a great God : the grandeur of the prince is the pride and pleasure of all his good subjects.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 1.—"*Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*" That is, as Jerome says, Thou art arrayed and adorned with magnificence and splendour ; Thou art acknowledged to be glorious and illustrious by thy works, as a man by his garment. Whence it is clear that the greatness celebrated here is not the intrinsic but the exterior or revealed greatness of God.—*Lorinus.*

Verses 1—4.—Each created, redeemed, regenerated soul is bound to praise the Lord, the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier ; for that God the Son, who in the beginning made the worlds, and whose grace is ever carrying on his work to its perfect end by the operation of the Holy Ghost, has been revealed before us in his exceeding glory. He, as the eternal High-priest, hath put on the Urim and Thummim of majesty and honour, and hath clothed himself with light, as a priest clothes himself with his holy vestments : his brightness on the mount of transfiguration was but a passing glimpse of what he is now, ever hath been, and ever shall be. He is the true Light, therefore his angels are the angels of light, his children the children of light, his doctrine the doctrine of light. The universe is his tabernacle ; the heavens visible and invisible are the curtains which shroud his holy place. He hath laid the beams and foundations of his holy of holies very high, even above the waters which are above the firmament. The clouds and the winds of the lower heaven are his chariot, upon which he stood when he ascended from Olivet, upon which he will sit when he cometh again.—"*Plain Commentary.*"

Verse 2.—"*Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment.*" In comparing *the light* with which he represents God as *arrayed* to "*a garment*," he intimates, that although God is invisible, yet his glory is conspicuous enough. In respect of his essence, God undoubtedly dwells in light that is inaccessible ; but as he irradiates the whole world by his splendour, this is the garment in which he, who is hidden in himself, appears in a manner visible to us. The knowledge of this truth is of the greatest importance. If men attempt to reach the infinite height to which God is exalted, although they fly above the clouds, they

must fail in the midst of their course. Those who seek to see him in his naked majesty are certainly very foolish. That we may enjoy the sight of him, he must come forth to view with his clothing; that is to say, we must cast our eyes upon the very beautiful fabric of the world in which he wishes to be seen by us, and not be too curious, and rash in searching into his secret essence. Now, since God presents himself to us clothed with light, those who are seeking pretexts for their living without the knowledge of him, cannot allege in excuse of their slothfulness, that he is hidden in profound darkness. When it is said that *the heavens are a curtain*, it is not meant that under them God hides himself, but that by them his majesty and glory are displayed, being, as it were, his royal pavilion.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 2.—"*With light.*" The first creation of God in the works of the days was the light of sense; the last was the light of reason: and his Sabbath work ever since is the illumination of the spirit.—*Francis Bacon.*

Verse 2.—"*Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.*" It is usual in the East, in the summer season, and upon all occasions when a large company is to be received, to have the court of the house sheltered from the heat of the weather by an umbrella or veil, which being expanded upon ropes from one side of the parapet wall to another may be folded or unfolded at pleasure. The Psalmist seems to allude to some covering of this kind in that beautiful expression of *stretching out the heavens like a curtain.—Kitto's Pictorial Bible.*

Verse 2.—"*Like a curtain.*" With the same ease, by his mere word, with which a man spreads out a tent-curtain, Isai. liv. 2, Is. xl. 22 is parallel, "that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." Ver. 3 continues the description of the work of the second day. There lie at bottom, in the first clause, the words of Gen. i. 7: "God made the vaulted sky and divided between the waters which are under the vault and the waters which are above the vault." The waters above are the materials with which, or out of which, the structure is reared. To construct out of the movable waters a firm palace, the cloudy heaven, "firm as a molten glass" (Job. xxxvii. 18), is a magnificent work of divine omnipotence.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 2.—"*Like a curtain.*" Because the Hebrews conceived of heaven as a temple and palace of God, that sacred azure was at once the floor of his, the roof of our, abode. Yet methinks the dwellers in tents ever loved best the figure of the heavenly tent. They represent God as daily spreading it out, and fastening it at the extremity of the horizon to the pillars of heaven, the mountains: it is to them a tent of safety, of rest, of a fatherly hospitality in which God lives with his creatures.—*Herder, quoted by Perowne.*

Verse 3.—The metaphorical representation of God, as *laying the beams of his chambers in the waters*, seems somewhat difficult to understand; but it was the design of the prophet, from a thing incomprehensible to us, to ravish us with the greater admiration. Unless *beams* be substantial and strong, they will not be able to sustain even the weight of an ordinary house. When, therefore, God makes the waters the foundation of his heavenly palace, who can fail to be astonished at a miracle so wonderful? When we take into account our slowness of apprehension, such hyperbolical expressions are by no means superfluous; for it is with difficulty that they awaken and enable us to attain even a slight knowledge of God.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 3.—"*Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters;*" or, "*who layeth his upper chambers above the waters.*" His upper chamber (people in the East used to retire to the upper chamber when they wished for solitude) is reared up in bright æther on the slender foundation of rainy clouds.—*A. F. Tholuck.*

Verse 3.—"*Who layeth the beams,*" etc. "He flooreth his chambers with waters," i. e., the clouds make the flooring of his heavens.—*Zachary Mudge.*

Verse 3.—"*Who walketh upon the wings of the wind;*" see Ps. xviii. 10; which

is expressive of his swiftness in coming to help and assist his people in time of need; who helps, and that right early; and may very well be applied both to the first and second coming of Christ, who came leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills, when he first came; and, when he comes a second time will be as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices, Cant. ii. 8, and viii. 14. The Targum is, "upon the swift clouds, like the wings of an eagle"; hence, perhaps, it is the heathens have a notion that Jupiter is being carried in a chariot through the air when it thunders and lightens.—*John Gill.*

Verse 3.—"*Who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*" In these words there is an unequalled elegance; not, he *fleeth*—he *runneth*, but—he *walketh;* and that *on the very wings of the wind;* on the most impetuous element raised into the utmost rage, and sweeping along with incredible rapidity. We cannot have a more sublime idea of the deity; serenely walking on an element of inconceivable swiftness, and, as it seems to us, uncontrollable impetuosity!—*James Hervey*, 1713-14—1758.

Verse 4.—"*Who maketh his angels spirits.*" Some render it, *Who maketh his angels* as *the winds*, to which they may be compared for their invisibility, they being not to be seen, no more than the wind, unless when they assume an external form; and for their penetration through bodies in a very surprising manner; see Acts xii. 6–10; and for their great force and power, being mighty angels, and said to excel in strength, Ps. ciii. 20; and for their swiftness in obeying the divine commands; so the Targum, "He maketh his messengers, or angels, swift as the wind."—*John Gill.*

Verse 4.—"*Who maketh his angels spirits.*" The words, "*creating his angels spirits,*" may either mean "creating them spiritual beings, not material beings," or "creating them winds"—*i.e.*, like the winds, invisible, rapid in their movements, and capable of producing great effects. The last mode of interpretation seems pointed out by the parallelism—"*and his ministers*"—or, "servants"—who are plainly the same as his angels,—"*a flame of fire,*" *i.e.*, like the lightning. The statement here made about the angels seems to be this: "They are created beings, who in their qualities bear a resemblance to the winds and the lightning."

The argument deduced by Paul, in Heb. ii. 7, from this statement for the inferiority of the angels is direct and powerful:—He is the Son; they are the creatures of God. "*Only begotten*" is the description of his mode of existence; *made* is the description of theirs. *All* their powers are communicated power; and however high they may stand in the scale of creation, it is in that scale they stand, which places them infinitely below him, who is so the Son of God as to be "God over all, blessed for ever."—*John Brown, in* "*An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.*"

Verse 4.—"*A flaming fire.*" Fire is expressive of irresistible power, immaculate holiness, and ardent emotion. It is remarkable that the seraphim, one class at least of these ministers, have their name from a root signifying to burn; and the altar, from which one of them took the live coal, Isai. vi. 6, is the symbol of the highest form of holy love.—*James G. Murphy, in* "*A Commentary on the Book of Psalms,*" 1875.

Verse 5.—"*Not be removed for ever.*" The stability of the earth is of God, as much as the being and existence of it. There have been many earthquakes or movings of the earth in several parts of it, but the whole body of the earth was never removed so much as one hair's breadth out of its place, since the foundations thereof were laid. *Archimedes*, the great mathematician, said, "If you will give me a place to set my engine on, I will remove the earth." It was a great brag; but the Lord hath laid it too fast for man's removing. Himself can make it quake and shake, he can move it when he pleaseth; but he never hath nor will remove it. He hath laid the foundations of the earth that it shall not be removed, nor can it be at all moved, but at

his pleasure ; and when it moves at any time, it is to mind the sons of men that they by their sins have moved him to displeasure.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 5.—The philosophical mode of stating this truth may be seen in *Amédée Guillemin's* work entitled "THE HEAVENS." "How is it that though we are carried along with a vast rapidity by the motion of the earth, we do not ourselves perceive our movement? It is because the entire bulk of the earth, atmosphere, and clouds, participate in the movement. This constant velocity, with which all bodies situated on the surface of the earth are animated, would be the cause of the most terrible and general catastrophe that could be imagined, if, by any possibility, the rotation of the earth were abruptly to cease. Such an event would be the precursor of a most sweeping destruction of all organized beings. But the constancy of the laws of nature permits us to contemplate such a catastrophe without fear. It is demonstrated that the position of the poles of rotation on the surface of the earth is invariable. It has also been asked whether the velocity of the earth's rotation has changed, or, which comes to the same thing, if the length of the sidereal day and that of the solar day deduced from it have varied within the historical period? Laplace has replied to this question, and his demonstration shows that it has not varied the one hundredth of a second during the last two thousand years."

Verses 5—9.—

God of the earth and sea, Thou hast laid earth's foundations :
Because thy hand sustaineth,
It ever firm remaineth.
Once didst thou open its deep, hidden fountains,
And soon the rising waters stood above the mountains.

At thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of thy thunder,
The flood thy mandate heeded,
And hastily receded :
The waters keep the place Thou has assigned them,
And in the hills and vales a channel Thou dost find them.

A limit Thou hast set, which they may not pass over ;
The deep within bound inclosing,
Strong barriers interposing,
That its proud waves no more bring desolation,
And sweep away from earth each human habitation.

—*John Barton, in "The Book of Psalms in English Verse: a New Testament Paraphrase,"* 1871.

Verses 6—8.—"*Stood,*" "*fled,*" "*hasted away.*" The words of the psalm put the original wondrous process graphically before the eye. The change of tense, too, from past to present, in verses 6, 7, 8, is expressive, and paints the scene in its progress. In ver. 6 "*stood*" should be STAND : in ver. 7 "*fled*" should be FLEE : and "*hasted away*" should be HASTE AWAY, as in the P. B. V. —"*The Speaker's Commentary.*"

Verse 7.—"*At thy rebuke they fled.*" The famous description of Virgil comes to mind, who introduces Neptune as sternly rebuking the winds for daring without his consent to embroil earth and heaven, and raise such huge mountain-waves : then swifter than the word is spoken, he calms the swollen seas, scatters the gathered clouds, and brings back the sun.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 7.—"*At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away ;*" ran off with great precipitance : just as a servant, when his master puts on a stern countenance, and speaks to him in a thundering, menacing manner, hastes away from him to do his will and work. This is an instance of the mighty power of Christ ; and by the same power he removed the waters of the deluge, when they covered the earth, and the tops of the highest hills ; and rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry land ; and drove back the waters of Jordan for the Israelites to pass through ; and who also rebuked the Sea of Galilee when his disciples were in distress ; and with equal ease can he and does he remove the depth of sin and

darkness from his people at conversion ; rebukes Satan, and delivers out of his temptations, when he comes in like a flood ; and commands off the waters of affliction when they threaten to overwhelm : who are his servants, and come when he bids them come, and go when he bids them go.—*John Gill.*

Verse 7.—"*At the voice of thy thunder.*" It is very likely God employed the electric fluid as an agent in this separation.—*Ingram Cobbin.*

Verse 7.—"*They hasted away.*"

God said,
Be gather'd now, ye waters under heaven
Into one place and let dry land appear.
Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the clouds ; their tops ascend the sky :
So high as heav'd the tumid hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of waters : Thither they
Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd
As drops on dust conglobing from the dry :
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
For haste : such flight the great command impress'd
On the swift floods : As armies at the call
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
Troop to their standard ; so the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
Soft-ebbing ; nor withstood them rock or hill ;
But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
With serpent errour wandering, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore ;
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks, where rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw their tumid train,
The dry land, Earth ; and the great receptacle
Of congregated waters, he called Seas :
And saw that it was good.

—*John Milton.*

Verse 8.—"*They go up by the mountains,*" etc. The Targum is, "They ascend out of the deep to the mountains" ; that is, the waters, when they went off the earth at the divine orders, steered their course up the mountains, and then went down by the valleys to the place appointed for them ; they went over hills and dales, nothing could stop them or retard their course till they came to their proper place ; which is another instance of the almighty power of the Son of God.—*John Gill.*

Verse 9.—"*Thou hast set a bound,*" etc. The Baltic Sea, in our own time, inundated large tracts of land, and did great damage to the Flemish people and other neighbouring nations. By an instance of this kind we are warned what would be the consequence, were the restraint imposed upon the sea, by the hand of God, removed. How is it that we have not thereby been swallowed up together, but because God has held in that outrageous element by his word ? In short, although the natural tendency of the waters is to cover the earth, yet this will not happen, because God has established, by his word, a counteracting law, and as his truth is eternal, this law must remain stedfast. —*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—"*Thou hast set a bound,*" etc. In these words the psalmist gives us three things clearly concerning the waters. First, that once (he means it not of the deluge, but of the chaos), the waters did cover the whole earth, till God by a word of command sent them into their proper channels, that the dry land might appear. Secondly, that the waters have a natural propension to return back and cover the earth again. Thirdly, that the only reason why they do not return back and cover the whole earth is, because God hath "*set*

a bound, that they cannot pass." They would be boundless and know no limits. did not God bound and limit them. Wisdom giveth us the like eulogium of the power of God in this, Prov. viii. 29, "He gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment." What cannot he command, who sendeth his commandment to the sea and is obeyed? Some great princes, heated with rage and drunken with pride, have cast shackles into the sea, as threatening it with imprisonment and bondage if it would not be quiet: but the sea would not be bound by them; they have also awarded so many strokes to be given the sea as a punishment of its contumacy and rebellion against either their commands or their designs. How ridiculously ambitious have they been, who would needs pretend to such a dominion! Many princes have had great power at and upon the sea, but there was never any prince had any power over the sea; that's a flower belonging to no crown but the crown of heaven.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9.—"*Thou hast set a bound,*" etc. A few feet of increase in the ocean wave that pursues its tidal circuit round the globe, would desolate cities and provinces innumerable. . . . But with what immutable and safe control God has marked its limits! You shall observe a shrub or a flower on a bank of verdure that covers a sea cliff, or hangs down in some hollow; nay, you shall mark a pebble on the beach, you shall lay a shred of gossamer upon it; and this vast, ungovernable, unwieldy, tempestuous element shall know how to draw a line of moisture by its beating spray at the very edge, or on the very point of your demarcation, and then draw off its forces, not having passed one inch or hand's breadth across the appointed margin. And all this exact restraint and measurement in the motion of the sea, by that mysterious power shot beyond unfathomable depths of space, from orbs rolling in ether! a power itself how prodigious, how irresistible, yet how invisible, how gentle, how with minutest exactness measured and exerted.—*George B. Cheever, in "Voices of Nature to her Foster Child, the soul of Man,"* 1852.

Verse 9.—"*A bound that they may not pass over.*"

Now stretch your eye off shore, o'er waters made
To cleanse the air, and bear the world's great trade,
To rise and wet the mountains near the sun,
Then back into themselves in rivers run,
Fulfilling mighty uses, far and wide,
Through earth, in air, or here, as ocean-tide.
Ho! how the giant heaves himself, and strains
And flings to break his strong and viewless chains;
Foams in his wrath; and at his prison doors,
Hark! hear him! how he beats, and tugs, and roars,
As if he would break forth again, and sweep
Each living thing within his lowest deep.

—*Richard Henry Dana* (1787—).

Verse 10.—"*He sendeth the springs into the valleys,*" etc. Having spoken of the salt waters, he treats afterwards of the sweet and potable, commending the wisdom and providence of God, that from the lower places of the earth and the hidden veins of the mountains, he should cause the fountains of water to gush forth.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 10.—"*He sendeth the springs into the valleys.*" The more of humility the more of grace; if in valleys some hollows are deeper than others the waters collect in them.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 10.—"*He sendeth the springs into the valleys.*" Men cut places for rivers to run in, but none but God can cut a channel to bring spiritual streams into the soul. The psalmist speaks of the sending forth of springs as one great act of the providence of God. It is a secret mystery which those that have searched deepest into nature cannot resolve us in, how those springs are fed, how they are maintained and nourished, so as to run without ceasing in such great streams as many of them make. Philosophy cannot show the

reason of it. The Psalmist doth it well: *God sends them into the valleys*, his providence and power keeps them continually running: he that would have his soul watered must go to God in prayer.—*Ralph Robinson.*

Verse 10.—"*Which run among the hills.*" That is, the *streams* or *springs* run. In many a part of the world can be found a Sault, a *dancing water*, and a Minne-ha-ha, a *laughing water*. The mountain streams *walk*, and *run*, and leap, and praise the Lord.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verses 10, 13, 14.—"HE." "HE." "HE."

All things are here of *Him*; from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bow'd waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs.

—*Byron.*

Verse 11.—"*The wild asses quench their thirst.*" It is particularly remarked of the *asses*, that though they are dull and stupid creatures, yet by Providence they are taught the way to the waters, in the dry and sandy deserts, and that there is no better guide for the thirsty travellers to follow, than to observe the herds of them descending to the streams.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 11.—"*The wild asses quench their thirst.*" As evening approached we saw congregated, near a small stream, what appeared to be a large company of dismounted Arabs, their horses standing by them. As we were already near them, and could not have escaped the watchful eye of the Bedouins, we prepared for an encounter. We approached cautiously, and were surprised to see that the horses still remained without their riders; we drew still nearer, when they galloped off towards the desert. They were *wild asses.* —*Henry Austin Layard.*

Verse 12.—"*By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation.*" Never shall I forget my first ride from Riha to Ain Sultân; our way lay right across the oasis evoked by the waters. It may be that the contrast with the arid desert of the previous day heightened the feelings of present enjoyment, but certainly they echoed the words of Josephus,—a "Divine region." At one time I was reminded of Epping Forest, and then of a neglected orchard with an undergrowth of luxuriant vegetation. Large thorn bushes and forest shrubs dotted the plain on every side. In some places the ground was carpeted with flowers, and every bush seemed vocal with the cheerful twittering of birds. I use the word "twittering," because I do not think that I ever heard a decided warble during the whole time I was in Syria. Coleridge speaks of the "merry nightingale,"

"That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast, quick warble, his delicious notes."

The song of my little Syrian friends seemed to consist of a series of cheerful chirps. Other travellers have been more fortunate. Bonar speaks of the note of the cuckoo; Dr. Robinson of the nightingale. Lord Lindsay tells us of the delight of an evening spent by the Jordan, "the river murmuring along, and the nightingale singing from the trees." Canon Tristram, describing the scenery near Tell-el-Kady, says that "the bulbul and nightingale vied in rival song in the branches above, audible over the noise of the torrent below." In the face of these statements it seems to me remarkable, considering the innumerable references to nature in the Bible, that the singing of birds is only mentioned three times. In the well-known passage which so exquisitely depicts a Syrian spring, we read "the time of the singing of birds is come" (Song of Solomon ii. 12). The Psalmist in speaking of the mighty power and wondrous Providence of God, mentions the springs in "the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses

quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation which sing among the branches." Canon Tristram commenting on this passage, says, that it may refer especially to the "bulbul and the nightingale, both of which throng the trees that fringe the Jordan and abound in all the wooded valleys, filling the air in early spring with the rich cadence of their notes."—*James Wareing Bardsley, in "Illustrative Texts,"* 1876.

Verse 12.—"*By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,*" etc. To such birds may saints be compared; being, like them, weak, defenceless, and timorous; liable to be taken in snares, and sometimes wonderfully delivered; as well as given to wanderings and strayings; and to fowls *of the heaven*, being heaven-born souls, and partakers of the heavenly calling. These have their habitation by the fountain of Jacob, by the river of divine love, beside the still waters of the sanctuary, where they sing the songs of Zion, the songs of electing, redeeming, and calling grace.—*John Gill.*

Verse 12.—"*The fowls . . . which sing among the branches.*" The music of birds was the first song of thanksgiving which was offered from the earth, before man was formed.—*John Wesley.*

Verse 12.—"*The fowls of the heaven which sing among the branches.*" How do the blackbird and thrassel [thrush], with their melodious voices, bid welcome to the cheerful spring, and in their fixed months warble forth such ditties as no art or instrument can reach to? . . . . But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it makes mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, "Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou affordest bad men such music on earth?"—*Izaak Walton.*

Verse 12.—

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
The little birdies blithely sing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the birks of Aberfeldy.
The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep-roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy.

—*Robert Burns,* 1759—1796.

Verse 13.—"*The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works;*" that is, with the rain, which is thy work, causing it to be showered down when thou pleasest upon the earth; or, with the rain, which proceeds from the clouds; or, with the fruits, which thou causeth the earth by this means to bring forth.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 14.—"*He causeth the grass to grow.*" Surely it should humble men to know that all human power united cannot make anything, not even the grass to grow.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 14.—"*For the cattle,*" etc. To make us thankful, let us consider, 1. That God not only provides for us, but for our servants; the cattle that are of use to man, are particularly taken care of; grass is made to grow in great abundance for them, when "the young lions," that are not for the service of man, often "lack, and suffer hunger." 2. That our food is nigh us, and ready to us: having our habitation on the earth, there we have our storehouse, and depend not on "the merchant ships that bring food from afar," Prov. xxxi. 14. 3. That we have even from the products of the earth, not only for necessity, but for ornament and delight, so good a master do we serve. Doth nature call for something to support it, and repair its daily decays? Here is "*bread which strengtheneth man's heart,*" and is therefore called the staff of life; let

none that have that complain of want. Doth nature go further, and covet something pleasant? Here is "*wine that maketh glad the heart*," refresheth the spirits, and exhilarates them, when it is soberly and moderately used; that we may not only go through our business, but go through it cheerfully; it is a pity that that should be abused to overcharge the heart, and distit men for their duty, which was given to revive their heart, and quicken them in their duty. Is nature yet more humoursome, and doth it crave something for ornament too? Here is that also out of the earth: "*oil to make the face to shine*," that the countenance may not only be cheerful, but beautiful, and we may be the more acceptable to one another.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 14.—"*For the service of man.*" The common version of these words can only mean for his benefit or use, a sense not belonging to the Hebrew word, which, as well as its verbal root, is applied to man's servitude or bondage as a tiller of the ground (Gen. iii. 17—19), and has here the sense of husbandry or cultivation, as in Exod. i. 14, Lev. xxv. 39, it has that of compulsory or servile labour, the infinitive in the last clause indicates the object for which labour is imposed on man.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 14.—"*That he may bring forth food out of the earth.*" The Israelites at the feast of the Passover and before the breaking of bread, were accustomed to say, "Praise be to the Lord our God, thou King of the world, who hath brought forth our bread from the earth": and at each returning harvest we ought to be filled with gratitude, as often as we again receive the valuable gift of bread. It is the most indispensable and necessary means of nourishment, of which we never tire, whilst other food, the sweeter it is, the more easily it surfeits: everybody, the child and the old man, the beggar and the king, like bread. We remember the unfortunate man, who was cast on the desert isle, famishing with hunger, and who cried at the sight of a handful of gold, "Ah, it is only gold!" He would willingly have exchanged for a handful of bread, this to him, useless material, which in the mind of most men is above all price. O let us never sin against God, by lightly esteeming bread! Let us gratefully accept the sheaves we gather, and thankfully visit the barns which preserve them; that we may break bread to the hungry, and give to the thirsty from the supplies God has given us. Let us never sit down to table without asking God to bless the gifts we receive from his gracious hand, and never eat bread without thinking of Christ our Lord, who calls himself the living bread, who came down from heaven to give life unto the world. And above all, may we never go to the table of the Lord without enjoying, through the symbols of bread and wine, his body and blood, whereby we receive strength to nourish our spiritual life! Yes, Lord, thou satisfiest both body and soul, with bread from earth and bread from heaven. Praise be to thy holy name, our hearts and mouths shall be full of thy praises for time and eternity!—*Frederick Arndt, in* "*Lights of the Morning*," 1861.

Verse 15.—When thou wert taken out of the womb, what a stately palace did he bring thee into, the world, which thou foundest prepared and ready furnished with all things for thy maintenance, as Canaan was to the children of Israel; a stately house thou buildest not, trees thou plantedst not, a rich canopy spangled, spread as a curtain over thy head; he sets up a taper for thee to work by, the sun, till thou art weary (v. 23), and then it goes down without thy bidding, for it *knows its going down*" (v. 19); then he draws a curtain over half the world, that men may go to rest: "*Thou causest darkness, and it is night*" (v. 20). As an house this world is, so curiously contrived that to every room of it, even to every poor village, springs do come as pipes to find thee water (v. 10, 11). The pavement of which house thou treadest on, and it brings forth thy food (v. 14), "*Bread for strength, wine to cheer thy heart, oil to make thy face to shine*" (v. 15). Which three are there synecdochically put for all things needful to strength, ornament, and delight.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 15.—"*Wine that maketh glad the heart of man.*" The wine mentioned

had the quality of fermented liquors; it gladdened the heart. Thus, if taken to excess, it would have led to intoxication. The Hebrew term is *yayin*, answering to the Greek *oinos*, and including every form which the juice of the grape might be made to assume as a beverage. It was this of which Noah partook when he became drunken (Gen. ix. 21, 24). Melchizedek brought it forth to Abraham (Gen. xiv. 18). Lot's daughters gave it to their father and made him drunk (Gen. xix. 35). From this the Nazarite was to separate himself (Num. vi. 3—20). This is the highly intoxicating drink so often mentioned by Isaiah (v. 11—22, xxii. 13, xxviii. 1—7 &c.); but just because of this, it might become to man one of those mercies in connection with the use of which he was to exercise constant self-control. Taken to excess it was a curse; enjoyed as from God, it was something for which man was called to be thankful.—*John Duns.*

Verse 15.—"*And oil to make his face to shine.*" Observe, after the mention of wine, he speaks of oil or ointment, because at the banquets among the Jews and other Eastern people, as afterwards among the Greeks and Romans, there was a frequent use of ointments. The reasons why ointment was poured upon the head were: To avoid intoxication: To improve the health: To contribute to pleasure and delight. Homer often refers to this custom, and there is an allusion to it by Solomon, Eccles. ix. 8, "*Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.*" See also Ps. xxiii. 5.—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 15.—The ancients made much use of oil to beautify their persons. We read of "*oil to make man's face to shine.*" Ruth anointed herself for decoration (Ruth iii. 3), and the woman of Tekoah and the prophet Daniel omitted the use of oil for the contrary reason (2 Sam. xiv. 3; Dan. x. 3). The custom is also mentioned in Matt. vi. 17; Luke vii. 46.—*Ambrose Serle in "Horæ Solitariæ,"* 1815.

Verse 15.—"*Bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*" In hunger not only the *strength* is prostrated, but the *natural courage* is also abated. *Hunger* has no enterprise, emulation, nor courage. But when, in such circumstances, a little bread is received into the stomach, even before concoction can have time to prepare it for nutriment, the *strength* is restored, and the *spirits* revived. This is a surprising effect, and it has not yet been satisfactorily accounted for.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 15.—"*Bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*" In Homer's Odyssey we meet with the expression "Bread, the marrow of men."

Verse 15.—"*Man's heart.*" It is not without reason that instead of the word האדם *of Adam*, which was used in v. 14, there is here employed the word אנוש, an *infirm* and *feeble* man, because he mentions those nourishments of which there was no need before the fall, and which are specially suitable to nourish and exhilarate feeble man.—*Venema.*

Verse 15.—If the transitory earth is so full of the good things of God, what will we have when we come to the land of the living?—*Starke, in Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 16.—"*The trees of the* Lord." The transition which the prophet makes from men to trees is as if he had said, It is not to be wondered at, if God so bountifully nourishes men who are created after his own image, since he does not grudge to extend his care even to trees. By "*the trees of the* Lord," is meant those which are high and of surpassing beauty; for God's blessing is more conspicuous in them. It seems scarcely possible for any juice of the earth to reach so great a height, and yet they renew their foliage every year.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 16.—"*The trees of the* Lord" may be so named from their size and stature—this name being used as a superlative in the Hebrew, or to denote aught which is great and extraordinary.—*Thomas Chalmers.*

Verse 16.—"*The trees of the* Lord," etc. The cedars are indeed the trees of the Lord. They are especially his planting. There is a sense in which,

above all other trees, they belong to him, and shadow forth in a higher degree his glory. The peculiar expression of the text, however, must not be limited to one particular species of cedar . . . . Encouraged by this Scripture usage, I shall use the word in a somewhat wider sense than the conventional one, to denote three remarkable examples which may be selected from the *coniferæ* to show the power and wisdom of God as displayed in the trees of the forest. These are, the cedar of Lebanon, the cedar of the Himalayas, and the cedar of the Sierra Nevada. The epithet which the psalmist applies to one, may most appropriately be applied to all of them ; and there are various reasons why the Lord may be said to have a special interest and property in each of them, to a few of which our attention may now be profitably directed.

1. They are "trees of the Lord" on account of the *peculiarities of their structure.* In common with all the pine tribe, they are exceptional in their organization. They reveal a new idea of the creative mind. 2. The cedars are "the trees of the Lord" on account of the *antiquity of their type.* It was of this class of trees that the pre-Adamite forests were principally composed. 3. The cedars are the "trees of the Lord," on account of the *majesty of their appearance.* It is the tree, *par excellence*, of the Bible—the type of all forest vegetation.—*Condensed from Hugh Macmillan's "Bible Teachings in Nature,"* 1868.

Verse 16.—"*Full of sap.*" The cedar has a store of resin. It flows from wounds made in the bark, and from the scales of the cones, and is abundant in the seeds. Both the resin and the wood were much valued by the ancients. The Romans believed that the gum which exuded from the cedar had the power of rendering whatever was steeped in it incorruptible ; and we are told that the books of Numa, the early king of Rome, which were found uninjured in his tomb, five hundred years after his death, had been steeped in oil of cedar. The Egyptians also used the oil in embalming their dead.—*Mary and Elizabeth Kirby, in "Chapters on Trees,"* 1873.

Verse 17.—"*Birds.*" The word rendered "*birds*" here is the word which in Ps. lxxxiv. 3 is translated *sparrow*, and which is commonly used to denote *small* birds. Comp. Lev. xiv. 4 (*margin*), and 5—7, 49—53. It is used, however, to denote birds of any kind. See Gen. vii. 14 ; Ps. viii. 8 ; xi. 1 ; cxlviii. 10.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 17.—"*The stork*" is instanced as one of the largest of nest-building birds, as the cedars of Lebanon were introduced in verse 16 as being the largest of uncultivated trees.—*A. C. Jennings and W. H. Lowe, in "The Psalms, with Introductions and Critical Notes,"* 1875.

Verse 17.—"*The stork, the fir trees are her house.*" In many cases the stork breeds among old ruins, and under such circumstances it is fond of building its nest on the tops of pillars or towers, the summits of arches, and similar localities. When it takes up its abode among mankind, it generally selects the breeding-places which have been built for it by those who know its taste, but it frequently chooses the top of a chimney, or some such locality. When it is obliged to build in spots where it can find neither rocks nor buildings, it builds on trees, and, like the heron, is sociable in its nesting, a whole community residing in a clump of trees. It is not very particular about the kind of tree, provided that it be tolerably tall, and strong enough to bear the weight of its enormous nest ; and the reader will at once see that the *fir-trees* are peculiarly fitted to be the houses for the stork.

The particular species of *fir-tree* to which the Psalmist alludes is probably the Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), which comes next to the great cedars of Lebanon in point of size. It was this tree that furnished the timber and planks for Solomon's temple and palace, a timber which was evidently held in the greatest estimation. This tree fulfils all the conditions which a stork would require in nest-building. It is lofty, and its boughs are sufficiently horizontal to form a platform for the nest, and strong enough to sustain it. On account

of its value and the reckless manner in which it has been cut down without new plantations being formed, the Aleppo pine has vanished from many parts of Palestine wherein it was formerly common, and would afford a dwelling-place for the stork. There are, however, several other species of fir which are common in various parts of the country, each species flourishing in the soil best suited to it, so that the stork would never be at a loss to find a nesting-place in a country which furnished so many trees suitable to its purposes.—*J. G. Wood, in "Bible Animals."*

Verse 17.—"*The stork, the fir trees are her house.*" Well-wooded districts are for the most part the favourite resorts of the storks, as they constantly select trees both for breeding purposes and as resting-places for the night; some few species, however, prove exceptions to this rule, and make their nests on roofs, chimneys, or other elevated situations in the immediate vicinity of men.—*From "Cassell's Book of Birds." From the Text of Dr. Brehm. By T. R. Jones, F.R.S.*

Verse 17.—"*The fir-trees.*" The doors of the temple were made of the fir-tree; even of that tree which was a type of the humanity of Jesus Christ. Consider Heb. ii. 14. The fir-tree is also the house of the stork, that unclean bird, even as Christ is a harbour and shelter for sinners. "*As for ths stork,*" saith the text, "*the fir-trees are her house;*" and Christ saith to the sinners that see their want of shelter, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." He is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble. He is, as the doors of fir of the temple, the inlet of God's house, to God's presence, and to a partaking of his glory. Thus God did of old, by similitudes teach his people his way.—*John Bunyan, in "Solomon's Temple Spiritualized."*

Verse 17.—

The eagle and the stork
On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build.

—*John Milton.*

Verse 18.—"*The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats.*" There is scarcely any doubt that the *Azel* of the Old Testament is the *Arabian Ibex* or *Beden* (*Capra Nubiana*). This animal is very closely allied to the well-known Ibex of the Alps, or Steinbock, but may be distinguished from it by one or two slight differences, such as the black beard and the slighter make of the horns, which moreover have three angles instead of four, as is the case with the Alpine Ibex. . . . . The colour of its coat resembles so nearly that of the rocks, that an inexperienced eye would see nothing but bare stones and sticks where a practised hunter would see numbers of *Beden*, conspicuous by their beautifully curved horns.

The agility of the *Beden* is extraordinary. Living in the highest and most craggy parts of the mountain ridge, it flings itself from spot to spot with a recklessness that startles one who has not been accustomed to the animal, and the wonderful certainty of its foot. It will, for example, dash at the face of a perpendicular precipice that looks as smooth as a brick wall, for the purpose of reaching a tiny ledge which is hardly perceptible, and which is some fifteen feet or so above the spot whence the animal sprang. Its eye, however, has marked certain little cracks and projections on the face of the rock, and as the animal makes its leap, it takes these little points of vantage in rapid succession, just touching them as it passes upwards, and by the slight stroke of its foot keeping up the original impulse of its leap. Similarly the Ibex comes sliding and leaping down precipitous sides of the mountains, sometimes halting with all the four feet drawn together, on a little projection scarcely larger than a penny, and sometimes springing boldly over a wild crevasse, and alighting with exact precision upon a projecting piece of rock, that seems scarcely large enough to sustain a rat comfortably.—*J. G. Wood.*

Verse 18.—"*Conies.*" When we were exploring the rocks in the neighbourhood of the convent, I was delighted to point attention to a family or two

of the *Wubur*, engaged in their gambols on the heights above us. Mr. Smith and I watched them narrowly, and were much amused with the liveliness of their motions, and the quickness of their retreat within the clefts of the rock when they apprehended danger. We were, we believe, the first European travellers who actually noticed this animal, now universally admitted to be the shaphan, or coney of Scripture, within the proper bounds of the Holy Land; and we were not a little gratified by its discovery. . . . . The preparer of the skin mistook it for a rabbit, though it is of a stronger build, and of a duskier colour, being of a dark brown. It is destitute of a tail, and has some bristles at its mouth, over its head, and down its back, along the course of which there are traces of light and dark shade. In its short ears, small, black, and naked feet, and pointed snout, it resembles the hedgehog. It does not, however, belong to the insectivora, but, though somewhat anomalous, it is allied to the pachydermata, among which it is now classed by naturalists.—*John Wilson, in* "*The Lands of the Bible*," 1847.

Verse 18.—"*Conies.*" People used to think the conies of Solomon the same as our rabbits, which are indeed "a feeble folk," but which do not "make their houses in the rock." Now that the *coney* is ascertained to be the Damon or Hyrax,—a shy defenceless creature, which lurks among the cliffs of the mountains, and darts into its den at the least approach of danger, the words of Agar acquire their full significance.—*James Hamilton.*

Verse 19.—"*He appointed the moon for seasons.*" When it is said, that the *moon was appointed to distinguish seasons*, interpreters agree that this is to be understood of the ordinary and appointed feasts. The Hebrews having been accustomed to compute their months by the moon, this served for regulating their festival days and assemblies both sacred and political. The prophet, I have no doubt, by the figure synecdoche, puts a part for the whole, intimating that the moon not only distinguishes the days from the nights, but likewise marks out the festival days, measures years and months, and, in fine, answers many useful purposes, inasmuch as the distinction of times is taken from her course.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 19.—"*He appointed the moon for seasons.*" "He made the moon to serve in her season, for a declaration of times, and a sign to the world. From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven; the beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord."—*Ecclesiasticus x.* 7.

Verse 19.—"*The sun knoweth his going down.*" The second clause is not to be rendered in the common way, "*The sun knoweth his going down*," but according to the usual idiom, *He*, i. e., GOD *knoweth the going down of the sun.* Not to mention the unwonted and harsh form of the phrase, by which *the knowledge of his setting* is attributed to the sun, there appears no reason why it should be here used, since it is destitute of force,* or why he should turn from God as a cause, to the moving sun, when both before and afterwards he speaks of God, saying, "*He appointed the moon*," "*Thou makest darkness.*" Far more fitly, therefore, is he to be understood as speaking of God, as before and after, so in the middle, of the directing cause of the appearances of the moon, the setting of the sun, and the spread of darkness. God also is said more correctly to *know* the going down of the sun, than the sun himself, since to *know* has in effect the force of to *care for*, as is often the case in other passages.—*Venema.*

Verse 20.—"*Thou makest darkness.*" Some observe with Augustine that in Genesis it is said that *light was made*, but not that *darkness was made*, because

* This excellent expounder cannot see the beauty of the poetic expression, and so proses in this fashion.

darkness is nothing, it is mere non-existence. But in this passage it is also said that *night was made;* and the Lord calls himself the *Maker of light and the Creator of darkness.—Lorinus.*

Verse 20.—"*Thou makest darkness,*" etc. It would be interesting to consider the wonderful adaptation of the length of the day to the health of man, and to the vigour and perhaps existence of the animal and vegetable tribes. The rejoicing of life depends so much upon the grateful alternation of day and night. For a full consideration of this subject I must refer the reader to Dr. Whewell's Bridgewater Treatise. The subjoined extracts may, however, aid reflection. "The terrestrial day, and consequently the length of the cycle of light and darkness, being what it is, we find various parts of the constitution both of animals and vegetables, which have a periodical character in their functions, corresponding to the diurnal succession of external conditions; and we find that the length of the period, as it exists in their constitution, coincides with the length of the natural day. The alternation of processes which takes place in plants by day and by night is less obvious, and less obviously essential to their well-being, than the annual series of changes. But there are abundance of facts which serve to show that such an alternation is part of the vegetable economy. . . . .

"Animals also have a period in their functions and habits; as in the habits of waking, sleeping, etc., and their well-being appears to depend on the coincidence of this period with the length of the natural day. We see that in the day, as it now is, all animals find seasons for taking food and repose, which agree perfectly with their health and comfort. Some animals feed during the day, as nearly all the ruminating animals and land birds; others feed only in the twilight, as bats and owls, and are called *crepuscular;* while many beasts of prey, aquatic birds, and others, take their food during the night. These animals, which are nocturnal feeders, are diurnal sleepers, while those which are crepuscular sleep partly in the night and partly in the day; but in all, the complete period of these functions is twenty-four hours. Man in like manner, in all nations and ages, takes his principal rest once in twenty-four hours; and the regularity of this practice seems most suitable to his health, though the duration of time allotted to repose is extremely different in different cases. So far as we can judge, this period is of a length beneficial to the human frame, independently of the effect of external agents. In the voyages recently made into high northern latitudes, where the sun did not rise for three months, the crews of the ships were made to adhere, with the utmost punctuality, to the habit of retiring to rest at nine, and rising a quarter before six; and they enjoyed, under circumstances apparently the most trying, a state of salubrity quite remarkable. This shows, that according to the common constitution of such men, the cycle of twenty-four hours is very commodious, though not imposed on them by external circumstances."—*William Whewell* (1795—1866).

Verse 21.—"*The young lions . . . . seek their meat from God.*" God feeds not only sheep and lambs, but wolves and lions. It is a strange expression that young lions when they roar after their prey, should be said to *seek their meat of God;* implying that neither their own strength nor craft could feed them without help from God. The strongest creatures left to themselves cannot help themselves. As they who fear God are fed by a special providence of God, so all creatures are fed and nourished by a general providence. The lion, though he be strong and subtle, yet cannot get his own prey; we think a lion might shift for himself; no, 'tis the Lord that provides for him; the young lions seek their meat of God. Surely, then, the mightiest of men cannot live upon themselves; as it is of God that we receive life and breath, so all things needful for the maintenance of this life.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 21.—"*The young lions roar.*" The roar of a lion, according to Burchell, sometimes resembles the sound which is heard at the moment of an earthquake; and is produced by his laying his head on the ground, and uttering

a half-stifled growl, by which means the noise is conveyed along the earth. The instant it is heard by the animals reposing in the plains, they start up in alarm, fly in all directions, and even rush into the danger which they seek to avoid.—*From Cassell's Popular Natural History.*

Verse 21.—The roaring of the young lions, like the crying of the ravens, is interpreted, *asking their meat of God.* Doth God put this construction upon the language of mere nature, even in venomous creatures, and shall he not much more interpret favourably the language of grace in his own people, though it be weak and broken groanings which cannot be uttered?—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 22.—"*The sun ariseth . . . . they lay them down in their dens.*" As wild beasts since the fall of man may seem to be born to do us hurt, and to rend and tear in pieces all whom they meet with, this savage cruelty must be kept under check by the providence of God. And in order to keep them shut up within their dens, the only means which he employs is to inspire them with terror, simply by the light of the sun. This instance of divine goodness, the prophet commends the more on account of its necessity; for were it otherwise, men would have no liberty to go forth to engage in the labours and business of life.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 23.—"*Man goeth forth unto his work,*" etc. Man alone, among all creatures, in distinction from the involuntary instruments of the Almighty, has a real daily work. He has a definite part to play in life; and can recognize it.—*Carl Bernhard Moll, in Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 23.—When the light of truth and righteousness shineth, error and iniquity fly away before it, and the "roaring lion" himself departeth for a time. Then the Christian *goeth forth to the work* of his salvation, and to his *labour* of love, until *the evening* of old age warns him to prepare for his last repose, in faith of a joyful resurrection.—*George Horne.*

Verse 24.—"*O* Lord, *how manifold are thy works!*" etc. If the number of the creatures be so exceeding great, how great, nay, immense, must needs be the power and wisdom of him who formed them all! For (that I may borrow the words of a noble and excellent author) as it argues and manifests more skill by far in an artificer, to be able to frame both *clocks* and *watches*, and *pumps* and *mills*, and *grenadoes* and *rockets*, than he could display in making but one of those sorts of engines; so the Almighty discovers more of his wisdom in forming such a vast multitude of different sorts of creatures, and all with admirable and irreprovable art, than if he had created but a few; for this declares the greatness and unbounded capacity of his understanding. Again, the same superiority of knowledge would be displayed by contriving engines of the same kind, or for the same purposes, after different fashions, as the moving of clocks by springs instead of weights: so the infinitely wise Creator hath shown in many instances that he is not confined to one only instrument for the working one effect, but can perform the same thing by divers means. So, though feathers seem necessary for flying, yet hath he enabled several creatures to fly without them, as two sorts of fishes, one sort of lizard, and the bat, not to mention the numerous tribes of flying insects. In like manner, though the air-bladder in fishes seems necessary for swimming, yet some are so formed as to swim without it, *viz.*, First, the *cartilaginous* kind, which by what artifice they poise themselves, ascend and descend at pleasure, and continue in what depth of water they list, is as yet unknown to us. Secondly, the *cetaceous* kind, or sea-beasts, differing in nothing almost but the want of feet. The air which in respiration these receive into their lungs, may serve to render their bodies equiponderant to the water; and the construction or dilatation of it, by the help of the diaphragm and muscles of

respiration, may probably assist them to ascend or descend in the water, by a light impulse thereof with their fins. . . . .

Again, the great use and convenience, the beauty and variety of so many springs and fountains, so many brooks and rivers, so many lakes and standing pools of water, and these so scattered and dispersed all the earth over, that no great part of it is destitute of them, without which it must, without a supply other ways, be desolate and void of inhabitants, afford abundant arguments of wisdom and counsel: that springs should break forth on the sides of mountains most remote from the sea: that there should way be made for rivers through straits and rocks, and subterraneous vaults, so that one would think that nature had cut a way on purpose to derive the water, which else would overflow and drown whole countries.—*John Ray* (1678—1705), *in* "*The Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation.*"

Verse 24.—"*How manifold are thy works!*" When we contemplate the wonderful works of Nature, and walking about at leisure, gaze upon this ample theatre of the world, considering the stately beauty, constant order, and sumptuous furniture thereof; the glorious splendour and uniform motion of the heavens; the pleasant fertility of the earth; the curious figure and fragrant sweetness of plants; the exquisite frame of animals; and all other amazing miracles of nature, wherein the glorious attributes of God, especially his transcendant goodness, are more conspicuously displayed: so that by them, not only large acknowledgments, but even gratulatory hymns, as it were, of praise have been extorted from the mouths of Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, and such like men, never suspected guilty of an excessive devotion; then should our hearts be affected with thankful sense, and our lips break forth in praise.—*William Barrow*, 1754—1836.

Verse 24.—He does not undertake to answer his own question, "*How manifold?*" for he confesses God's works to be greater than his own power of expression; whether these "*works*" belong to the creation of nature or to that of grace. And observe how the concurrent operation of the Blessed Trinity is set forth: "*O* LORD, *how manifold are thy works,*" teaches of the Father, the Source of all things: "*in wisdom hast thou made them all,*" tells of the Son, the Eternal Word, "Christ the power of God and the Wisdom of God, by whom were all things made, and without him was not anything made that was made," (1 Cor. i. 24; John i. 3); "*the earth is full of thy riches,*" is spoken of the Holy Ghost, who filleth the world.—*Augustine, Hugo, and Cassiodorus, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 24.—"*In wisdom hast thou made them all.*" Not only one thing, as the heavens, Ps. cxxxvi. 5; but everything is wisely contrived and made; there is a most glorious display of the wisdom of God in the most minute things his hands have made; he has made everything beautiful in its season. A skilful artificer, when he has finished his work and looks it over again, often finds some fault or another in it: but when the Lord had finished his works of creation, and looked over them, he saw that all was good; infinite wisdom itself could find no blemish in them: what weak, foolish, stupid creatures must they be that pretend to charge any of the works of God with folly, or want of wisdom?—*John Gill.*

Verse 24.—"*The earth is full of thy riches.*" literally, *thy possessions;* these thou keepest not to thyself, but blessest thy creatures with.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 25.—"*Things innumerable.*" The waters teem with more life than the land. Beneath a surface less varied than that of the continents, the sea enfolds in its bosom an exuberance of life, of which no other region of the globe can afford the faintest idea. Its life extends from the poles to the equator, from east to west. Everywhere the sea is peopled; everywhere, down to its unfathomable depths, live and sport creatures suited to the locality. In every spot of its vast expanse the naturalist finds instruction, and the philosopher meditation, while the very varieties of life tend to impress

upon our souls a feeling of gratitude to the Creator of the universe. Yes, the shores of the ocean and its depths, its plains and its mountains, its valleys and its precipices, even its *débris*, are enlivened and beautified by thousands of living beings. There are the solitary or sociable plants, upright or pendant, stretching in prairies, grouped in oases, or growing in immense forests. These plants give a cover to and feed millions of animals which creep, run, swim, fly, burrow in the soil, attach themselves to roots, lodge in the crevices, or build for themselves shelters, which seek or fly from one another, which pursue or fight each other, which caress each other with affection or devour each other without pity. Charles Darwin truly says that the terrestrial forests do not contain anything like the number of animals as those of the sea. The ocean, which is for man the element of death, is for myriads of animals a home of life and health. There is joy in its waves, there is happiness upon its shores, and heavenly blue everywhere.—*Moquin Tandon, in "The World of the Sea," Translated and enlarged by H. Martin Hart*, 1869.

Verses 25, 26.—"*Both small and great beasts.*"

> The sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
> With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
> Of fish that with their fins and shining scales
> Glide under the green wave, in shoals that oft
> Bank the mid sea; part single, or with mate,
> Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves
> Of coral stray; or sporting with quick glance,
> Show to the sun their wav'd coats drop't with gold;
> Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
> Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food
> In jointed armour watch: on smooth the seal
> And bended dolphins play: part huge of bulk
> Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
> Tempest the ocean: there leviathan,
> Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
> Stretch'd like a promontory sleeps or swims,
> And seems a moving land; and at his gills
> Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
>
> —*John Milton.*

Verse 26.—"*Ships.*" The original of ships was doubtless Noah's ark, so that they owe their first draught to God himself.—*John Gill.*

Verse 26.—"*There go the ships.*" Far from separating from each other the nations of the earth (as the ancients, still inexperienced in navigation, supposed), the sea is the great highway of the human race, and unites all its various tribes into one common family by the beneficial bonds of commerce. Countless fleets are constantly furrowing its bosom, to enrich, by perpetual exchanges, all the countries of the globe with the products of every zone, to convey the fruits of the tropical world to the children of the chilly north, or to transport the manufactures of colder climes to the inhabitants of the equatorial regions. With the growth of commerce civilization also spreads athwart the wide causeway of the ocean from shore to shore; it first dawned on the borders of the sea, and its chief seats are still to be found along its confines.—*G. Hartwig, in "The Harmonies of Nature,"* 1866.

Verse 26.—"*Leviathan.*" There is ground for thinking (though this is denied by some) that in several passages the term *leviathan* is used generically, much as we employ *dragon*; and that it denotes a great sea-monster.—*E. P. Barrows, in "Biblical Geography and Antiquities."*

Verse 26.—"*To play therein.*" Dreadful and tempestuous as the sea may appear, and uncontrollable in its billows and surges, it is only the field of *sport*, the *play-ground*, the *bowling green*, to those huge marine monsters.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 26.—"*Leviathan . . . made to play therein.*" With such wonderful strength is the tail of the whale endowed, that the largest of these animals, measuring some eighty feet in length, are able by its aid to leap clear out of

the water, as if they were little fish leaping after flies. This movement is technically termed "breaching," and the sound which is produced by the huge carcase as it falls upon the water is so powerful as to be heard for a distance of several miles.—*J. G. Wood, in "The Illustrated Natural History,"* 1861.

Verse 26.—"*Leviathan . . . made to play therein.*" Though these immense mammiferous fish have no legs, they swim with great swiftness, and they gambol in the mountains of water lashed up by the storms.—*Moquin Tandon.*

Verse 26.—"*Leviathan . . . made to play.*" He is made to "*play in the sea*"; he hath nothing to do as man hath, that "goes forth to his work"; he hath nothing to fear as the beasts have, that lie down in their dens; and therefore he plays with the waters: it is pity any of the children of men, that have nobler powers, and were made for nobler purposes, should live as if they were sent into the world like the leviathan into the waters, to play therein, spending all their time in pastime.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 26.—"*Therein.*" Fish, great and small, sport and play in the element, but as soon as they are brought out of it, they languish and die. Mark, O soul! what thy element is, if thou wouldest live joyful and blessed.—*Starke, in Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 27.—There are five things to be observed in God's sustaining all animals. His power, which alone suffices for all: "*These wait all upon thee.*" Wisdom, which selects a fitting time: "*That thou mayest give them their meat in due season.*" His majesty rising above all: "*That thou givest them they gather,*" like the crumbs falling from the table of their supreme Lord. His liberality, which retains nothing in his open hand that it does not give: "*Thou openest thine hand.*" His original goodness that flows down to all: "*They are filled with good,*" that is, with the good things that spring from thy goodness.—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 27.—"*That thou mayest give them their meat in due season;*" or, *in his time;* every one in its own time which is natural to them, and they have been used to, at which time the Lord gives it to them, and they take it; it would be well if men would do so likewise, eat and drink in proper and due time. Eccles. x. 17. Christ speaks a word in season to weary souls; his ministers give to every one his portion of meat in due season; and a word spoken in due season, how good and sweet is it? Is. vii. 4; Luke xii. 12; Prov. xv. 23.—*John Gill.*

Verses 27—32.—

These, Lord, all wait on thee, that thou their food mays't give them;
Thou to their wants attendest;
They gather what thou sendest;
Thine hand thou openest, all their need supplying,
O'erlookest not the least, the greatest satisfying.

When thou dost hide thy face a sudden change comes o'er them
Their breath in myriads taken,
They die, no more t' awaken;
But myriads more thy Spirit soon createth,
And the whole face of nature quickly renovateth.

The glory of the Lord, changeless, endures for ever;
In all his works delighting,
Nor e'en the smallest slighting;
Yet, if he frown, earth shrinks with fear before him,
And, at his touch, the hills with kindling flames adore him,

—*John Burton.*

Verse 28.—"*That thou givest them they gather.*" This sentence describes *The Commissariat of Creation.* The problem is the feeding of "the creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts," which swarm the sea; the armies of birds which fill the air, and the vast hordes of animals which people the dry land; and in this sentence we have the problem solved, "*That thou givest them they gather.*" The work is stupendous, but it is done with ease because the Worker is infinite: if he were not at the head of it the task would

never be accomplished. Blessed be God for the great THOU of the text. It is every way our sweetest consolation that the personal God is still at work in the world: leviathan in the ocean, and the sparrow on the bough, may be alike glad of this; and we, the children of the great Father, much more.

The general principle of the text is, God gives to his creatures, and his creatures gather. That general principle we shall apply to our own case as men and women; for it is as true of us as it is of the fish of the sea, and the cattle on the hills: "*That thou givest them they gather.*" I. *We have only to gather, for God gives.* In *temporal* things: God gives us day by day our daily bread, and our business is simply to gather it. As to *spirituals*, the principle is true, most emphatically, we have, in the matter of grace, only to gather what God gives. The natural man thinks that he has to earn divine favour; that he has to purchase the blessing of heaven; but he is in grave error: the soul has only to receive that which Jesus freely gives. II. *We can only gather what God gives;* however eager we may be, there is the end of the matter. The diligent bird shall not be able to gather more than the Lord has given it; neither shall the most avaricious and covetous man. "It is vain for you to rise up early and to sit up late, to eat the bread of carefulness; for so he giveth his beloved sleep." III. *We must gather what God gives*, or else we shall get no good by his bountiful giving. God feeds the creeping things innumerable, but each creature collects the provender for itself. The huge leviathan receives his vast provision, but he must go ploughing through the boundless meadows and gather up the myriads of minute objects which supply his need. The fish must leap up to catch the fly, the swallow must hawk for its food, the young lions must hunt for their prey. IV. The fourth turn of the text gives us the sweet thought that, *we may gather what he gives.* We have divine permission to enjoy freely what the Lord bestows. V. The last thing is, *God will always give us something to gather.* It is written, "The Lord will provide." Thus is it also in spiritual things. If you are willing to gather, God will always give.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 28.—"*Gather.*" The verb rendered "*gather*" means to pick up or collect from the ground. It is used in the history of the manna (Ex. xvi. 1, 5, 16), to which there is obvious allusion. The act of gathering from the ground seems to presuppose a previous throwing down from heaven.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 28.—"*Thou openest thine hand.*" The Greek expositors take *the opening of the hand* to indicate facility. I am of opinion that it refers also to abundance and liberality, as in Ps. cxlv. 16:—"*Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*" Using this same formula, God commands us *not to close the hand, but to open it to the poor.*—*Lorinus.*

Verse 29.—"*They are troubled.*" They are confounded; they are overwhelmed with terror and amazement. The word "*troubled*" by no means conveys the sense of the original word—בָּהַל, *bahal*—which means properly to tremble; to be in trepidation; to be filled with terror; to be amazed; to be confounded. It is that kind of consternation which one has when all support and protection are withdrawn, and when inevitable ruin stares one in the face. So when God turns away, all their support is gone, all their resources fail, *and they must die.* They are represented as conscious of this; or this is what would occur if they *were* conscious.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 30.—"*Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created.*" The Spirit of God creates every day: what is it that continueth things in their created being, but providence? That is a true axiom in divinity, *Providence is creation continued.* Now the Spirit of God who created at first, creates to this day: "*Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created.*" The work of creation was finished in the first six days of the world, but the work of creation is renewed every day, and so continued to the end of the world. Successive providential creation as well as original creation is ascribed to the Spirit. "*And thou*

renewest the face of the earth." Thou makest a new world; and thus God makes a new world every year, sending forth his Spirit, or quickening power, in the rain and sun to renew the face of the earth. And as the Lord sends forth his power in providential mercies, so in providential judgments.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 31.—"*The Lord shall rejoice in his works.*" Man alone amongst the creatures grieves God, and brought tears from the eyes of Christ, who rejoiced in Spirit, because the Father had deigned to reveal the mysteries to the little ones. It repented God that he had made men, because as a wise son maketh a glad father, so a foolish one is a vexation to him.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 31 (*last clause*).—What the Psalmist adds, *Let Jehovah rejoice in his works*, is not superfluous, for he desires that the order which God has established from the beginning may be continued in the lawful use of his gifts. As we read in Gen. vi. 6, that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth;" so when he sees that the good things which he bestows are polluted by our corruptions, he ceases to take delight in bestowing them. And certainly the confusion and disorder which take place, when the elements cease to perform their office, testify that God, displeased and wearied out, is provoked to discontinue, and put a stop to the regular course of his beneficence; although anger and impatience have strictly speaking no place in his mind. What is here taught is, that he bears the character of the best of fathers, who takes pleasure in tenderly cherishing his children, and in bountifully nourishing them.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 32.—"*He looketh on the earth and it trembleth.*" As man can soon give a cast with his eye, so soon can God shake the earth, that is, either the whole mass of the earth, or the inferior sort of men on the earth when he "*looketh,*" or casteth an angry eye "*upon the earth it trembleth.*" "*He toucheth the hills,*" (that is, the powers and principalities of the world), "*and they smoke;*" if he do but touch them they smoke, that is, the dreadful effects of the power and judgment of God are visible upon them.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 32.—No one save a photographer can sketch the desert around Sinai. Roberts' views are noble, and to a certain extent true; but they do not represent these desert cliffs and ravines. No artist can rightly do it. Only the photographer can pourtray the million of minute details that go to make up the bleakness, the wildness, the awfulness, and the dismal loneliness of these unearthly wastes.

About noon I went out and walked upon the convent roof. The star-light over the mountain-peaks was splendid, while the gloom that hung round these enormous precipices and impenetrable ravines was quite oppressive to the spirit. This is the scene of which David spoke. "*He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*" This is the mountain "that was touched, and that burned with fire" (Heb. xii. 18). Not the mount that "might be touched," as our translators have rendered it, but the mount "that was touched," ψηλα φωμενα,—the mount on which the finger of God rested.

We could imagine the black girdle of the thick darkness with which the mountain was surrounded, and the lightnings giving forth their quick fire through this covering, making its blackness blacker. We could imagine, too, the supernatural blaze, kindled by no earthly hand, that shot up out of the midst of this, like a living column of fire, ascending, amid the sound of angelic trumpets and superangelic thunders, to the very heart of heaven.—*Horatius Bonar, in "The Desert of Sinai,"* 1858.

Verse 32.—The philosopher labours to investigate the natural cause of earthquakes and volcanoes. Well, let him account as he will, still the immediate power of Jehovah is the true and ultimate cause. God works in these tremendous operations. "*He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth*

the hills, and they smoke." This is the philosophy of Scripture : this, then, shall be my philosophy. Never was a sentence uttered by uninspired man so sublime as this sentence. The thought is grand beyond conception ; and the expression clothes the thought with suitable external majesty. God needs no means by which to give effect to his purpose by his power, yet, in general, he has established means through which he acts. In conformity with this Divine plan, he created by means, and he governs by means. But the means which he has employed in creation, and the means which he employs in providence, are effectual only by his almighty power. The sublimity of the expression in this passage arises from the infinite disproportion between the means and the end. An earthly sovereign looks with anger, and his courtiers tremble. God looks on the earth, and it trembles to its foundation. He touches the mountains, and the volcano smokes, vomiting forth torrents of lava. Hills are said to melt at the presence of the Lord. "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob." How chill and withering is the breath of that noxious philosophy, that would detach our minds from viewing God in his works of Providence ! The Christian who lives in this atmosphere, or on the borders of it, will be unhealthy and unfruitful in true works of righteousness. This malaria destroys all spiritual life.—*Alexander Carson.*

Verse 32.—"*He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*" It's therefore ill falling into his hands, who can do such terrible things with his looks and touches.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 33.—"*I will sing unto the Lord.*" The Psalmist, exulting in the glorious prospect of the renovation of all things, breaks out in triumphant anticipation of the great event, and says, "I will sing unto the Lord," בְּחַיָּי *bechaiyai*, "with my *lives*," the life that I *now* have, and the *life* that I *shall have* hereafter.

"*I will sing praise to my God,*" בְּעוֹדִי *beodi*, "*in my eternity ;*" my going on, my endless progression. What astonishing ideas ! But then, how shall this great work be brought about ? and how shall the new earth be inhabited with righteous spirits only ? The answer is (verse 35), "*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.*"—*Adam Clarke.*

Verses 33—35.—All having been admonished to glorify God, he discloses what he himself is about to do ; with his voice he will declare his praises, "*I will sing unto the* LORD *as long as I live :*" with his hand he will write psalms, and set them to music, "*I will sing psalms to my God while I have my being :*" with his mind he will make sweet meditations, "*My meditation of him shall be sweet :*" with will and affection he will seek after God alone, "*I will be glad in the* LORD :" he predicts and desires the destruction of all sinners who think not of praising God, but dishonour him in their words and works, "*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more :*" lastly, with his whole soul and all his powers he will bless God, "*Bless thou the* LORD, *O my soul.*"—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 34.—"*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*" A Christian needs to study nothing but *Christ*, there is enough in Christ to take up his study and contemplation all his days ; and the more we study Christ, the more we may study him ; there will be new wonders still appearing in him.—*John Row*, 1680.

Verse 34.—"*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*" The last words ever written by Henry Martyn, dying among Mohammedans in Persia, was : I sat in the orchard and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God, in solitude my company, my Friend and Comforter.

Verse 34.—"*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*" I must meditate on Christ. Let philosophers soar in their contemplations, and walk among the stars ; what are the stars to Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the brightness of

the Father's glory, and the express image of his person? God manifest in the flesh is a theme which angels rejoice to contemplate.—*Samuel Lavington.*

Verse 34.—"*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*" First. Take this as *an assertion.* The meditation on God is sweet. And the sweetness of it should stir us up to the putting of it in practice. Secondly. Take it as *a resolution* —that he would make it for his own practice; that is, that he would comfort himself in such performances as these are; whilst others took pleasure in other things, he would please himself in communion with God, this should be his solace and delight upon all occasions. David promises himself a great deal of contentment in this exercise of divine meditation which he undertook with much delight: and so likewise do others of God's servants of the same nature and disposition with him in the like undertakings. Thirdly. Take it as *a prayer and petition.* It "*shall be,*" that is, *let it be,* the future put for the imperative, as it frequently uses to be; and so the word *gnatam* is to be translated, not, *of God,* but *to God.* Let my meditation, or prayer, or converse, be sweet unto him. *Placeat illi meditatio mea,* so some good authors interpret it. The English translation, "Let my words be acceptable," and the other before that, "Oh, that my words might please him," which comes to one and the same effect, all taking it in the notion of *a prayer:* this is that which the servants of God have still thought to be most necessary for them (as indeed it is); God's acceptance of the performances which have been presented by them.—*Condensed from Thomas Horton.*

Verse 34 (*first clause*).—All the ancients join in understanding it thus, "*My meditation shall be sweet to him,*" or, as the Jewish Arab, עִנְדֵה *with him,* according to that of the Psalmist, Psalm xix. 14: "Let the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight." Thus the Chaldee here, קֳרָמוֹי, *before him;* the LXXII. ἡδυνθείη αὐτῷ, "*Let it be sweet to him*"; the Syriac ܠܘܬ *to him,* and so the others also. And so עַל signifies *to* as well as *on.*—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 34.—"*I will be glad in the* LORD." Compare this with verse 31, and observe the mutual and reciprocal pleasure and delight between God who is praised and the soul that praises him. God, *who rejoices in his works,* takes the highest delight in man, the compendium of his other works, and in that work, than which none more excellent can be pursued by man, the work of praising God in which the blessed are employed. Thus in this very praise of God which is so pleasing to him, David professes to be evermore willing to take delight. *My beloved is mine,* sings the Spouse, *and I am his.*—*Lorinus.*

Verse 35.—"*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth,*" etc.—It fell to my lot some years ago, to undertake a walk of some miles, on a summer morning, along a sea-shore of surpassing beauty. It was the Lord's-day, and the language of the Hundred and fourth Psalm rose spontaneously in my mind as one scene after another unfolded itself before the eye. About half way to my destination the road lay through a dirty hamlet, and my meditations were rudely interrupted by the brawling of some people, who looked as if they had been spending the night in a drunken debauch. Well, I thought, the Psalmist must have had some such unpleasant experience. He must have fallen in with people, located in some scene of natural beauty, who, instead of being a holy priesthood to give voice to nature in praise of her Creator, instead of being, in the pure and holy tenor of their lives, the heavenliest note of the general song,—filled it with a harsh discord. His prayer is the vehement expression of a desire that the earth may no longer be marred by the presence of wicked men, —that they may be utterly consumed, and may give place to men animated with the fear of God, just and holy men, men that shall be a crown of beauty on the head of this fair creation. If this be the right explanation of the Psalmist's prayer, it is not only justifiable, but there is something wrong in our meditations on nature, if we are not disposed to join in it.—*William Binnie.*

Verse 35.—"*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth.*" This imprecation

depends on the last clause of the 31st verse, "*Let Jehovah rejoice in his works.*" As the wicked infect the world with their pollutions, the consequence is, that God has less delight in his own workmanship, and is even almost displeased with it. It is impossible, but that this uncleanness, which, being extended and diffused through every part of the world, vitiates and corrupts such a noble product of his hands, must be offensive to him. Since then the wicked, by their perverse abuse of God's gifts, cause the world in a manner to degenerate and fall away from its first original, the prophet justly desires that they may be exterminated, until the race of them entirely fails. Let us, then, take care so to weigh the providence of God, as that being wholly devoted to obeying him, we may rightly and purely use the benefits which he sanctifies for our enjoying them. Further, let us be grieved, that such precious treasures are wickedly squandered away, and let us regard it as monstrous and detestable, that men not only forget their Maker, but also, as it were, purposely turn to a perverse and an unworthy end, whatever good things he has bestowed upon them.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 35.—"*The sinners.*"

All true, all faultless, all in tune,
Creation's wondrous choir,
Opened in mystic unison,
To last till time expire.

And still it lasts: by day and night,
With one consenting voice,
All hymn thy glory, Lord, aright,
All worship and rejoice.

Man only mars the sweet accord,
O'erpowering with harsh din
The music of thy works and word,
Ill matched with grief and sin.

—*John Keble in "The Christian Year."*

Verse 35.—"*Bless thou the* LORD, *O my soul.*" Rehearse the first words of the Psalm which are the same as these. They are here repeated as if to hint that the end of good men is like their beginning, and that he is not of the number who begins in the spirit and seeks to be made perfect in the flesh. A worthy beginning of the Psalm, says Cassiodorus, and a worthy end, ever to bless him who never at any time fails to be with the faithful. The soul which blesses shall be made fat. . . . . Reined in by this rein of divine praise, he shall never perish.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 35.—This is the first place where HALLELUJAH ("*Praise ye the Lord*") occurs in the Book of Psalms. It is produced by a retrospect of *Creation*, and by the contemplation of God's goodness in the preservation of all the creatures of his hand, and also by a prospective view of that future Sabbath, when, by the removal of evil men from communion with the good, God will be enabled to look on his works, as he did on the first Sabbath, before the Tempter had marred them, and see "everything very good." See Gen. i. 31; ii. 2, 3.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 35.—"*Praise ye the* LORD." This is the first time that we meet with *Hallelujah;* and it comes in here upon occasion of the destruction of the wicked; and the last time we meet with it, it is upon the like occasion, when the New Testament Babylon is consumed, this is the burthen of the song,—"*Hallelujah,*" Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6.—*Matthew Henry.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—An exhortation to one's own heart. I. To remember the Lord as the first cause of all good. Bless not man, or fate, but *the Lord.* II. To do this in a loving, grateful, hearty, praiseful manner. *Bless* the Lord. III. To do it truly and intensely. *O my soul.* IV. To do it *now*—for various reasons and in all possible ways.

Verse 1 (*second clause*).—He is all this essentially, and in nature, providence, grace, and judgment.

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—The clearest revelation of God is still a concealment; even light is but a covering to him. God is clothed with light as we see him in his omniscience, his holiness, his revelation, his glory, in heaven and his grace on earth.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—I. God is leisurely in his haste: "he *walketh*," etc. II. God is swift even in his slackness: "he walketh *on the wings of the wind.*" III. The practical conclusions are that there is time enough for the divine purposes but none for our trifling; and that we should both wait with patience for the victory of his cause and hasten it by holy activity.

Verse 4.—I. The Nature of Angels. Spirits. II. The Lord of Angels. "Who maketh," etc. What must his own spirituality be who maketh spirits? III. The ministry of Angels. 1. Their office: "ministers." 2. Their activity or zeal: "a flaming fire." 3. Their dependence: *made* ministers.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 7.—The power of the divine word in nature shows its power in other spheres.

Verse 9.—I. All things have their appointed bounds. II. To pass those bounds without special permission by God is transgression. "Thou hast set a bound that they *may not* pass." III. Extraordinary cases should be followed by a return to ordinary duties. "That they turn not again," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—The thoughtfulness of God for those who, like the valleys, are lowly, hidden, and needy: the abiding character of his supplies: and the joyous results of his care.

Verses 10, 11.—God's care for wild creatures, reflections from it. (1.) Shall he not much more care for his people? (2.) Will he not look after wild, wandering men? (3.) Ought we not also to care for all that live?

Verses 10—12.—From the fertility, life and music which mark the course of a stream, illustrate the beneficial influences of the Gospel.—*C. A. Davis.*

Verse 14.—"In the Hayfield." (See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 757.) "*He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle.*" I. Grass is in itself instructive. 1. As a symbol of our mortality: "All flesh is grass." 2. As an emblem of the wicked. 3. As a picture of the elect of God. Isa. xxxv. 7; xliv. 4; Ps. lxxii. 6, 16. 4. Grass is comparable to the food wherewith the Lord supplies the necessities of his chosen ones. Ps. xxiii. 2; S. of Sol. i. 7. II. God is seen in the growing of the grass. 1. As a worker: "He causeth," etc. See God in common things—in solitary things. 2. See God as a caretaker: "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle." God cares for the beasts—the helpless—dumb and speechless things—providing suitable food for them: "grass." Let us, then, see his hand in providence at all times. III. God's working in the grass for the cattle gives us illustrations concerning grace. 1. God "cares for oxen" and satisfies their wants: there must then be something somewhere to satisfy the needs of the nobler creature man, and his immortal soul. 2. Though God provides the grass for the cattle, the cattle must eat it themselves. The Lord Jesus Christ is provided as the food of the soul. We must, by faith, receive and feed upon Christ. 3. Preventing grace may here be seen in a symbol: before the cattle were made, in this world there was grass. There were covenant supplies for God's people before they were in the world. 4. Here is an illustration of free grace: the cattle bring nothing to purchase the food. Why is this? (1) Because they belong to him, Ps. l. 10.

(2) Because he has entered into a covenant with them to feed them, Gen. ix. 9, 10.

In the text there is a mighty blow to free-will: "*He causeth* the grass to grow." Grace does not grow in the heart without a divine cause. If God cares to make grass grow he will also make us grow in grace. Again; the grass does not grow without an object; it is "for the cattle": but the cattle grow for man. What then, does man grow for? Observe, further, that the existence of the grass is necessary to complete the chain of nature. So the meanest child of God is necessary to the family.

Verse 16.—"The Cedars of Lebanon." (See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 529.) I. The absence of all human culture. These trees are peculiarly the Lord's trees, because, 1. They owe their planting entirely to him: "He hath planted." 2. They are not dependent upon man for their watering. 3. No mortal might protects them. 4. As to their inspection—they preserve a sublime indifference to human gaze. 5. Their exultation is all for God. 6. There is not a cedar upon Lebanon which is not independent of man in its expectations. II. The glorious display of divine care. 1. In the abundance of their supply. 2. They are always green. 3. Observe the grandeur and size of these trees. 4. Their fragrance. 5. Their perpetuity. 6. They are very venerable. III. The fulness of living principle: "The trees of the Lord are full of sap." 1. This is vitally necessary. 2. It is essentially mysterious. 3. It is radically secret. 4. It is permanently active. 5. It is externally operative. 6. It is abundantly to be desired.

Verses 17, 18.—"Lessons from Nature." (See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1,005.) I. For each place God has prepared a suitable form of life: for "the fir trees," "the stork"; for "the high hills" "the wild goat," etc. So, for all parts of the spiritual universe God has provided suitable forms of divine life. 1. Each age has its saints. 2. In every rank they are to be found. The Christian religion is equally well adapted for all conditions. 3. In every church spiritual life is to be found. 4. God's people are to be found in every city. II. Each creature has its appropriate place. 1. Each man has by God a providential position appointed to him. 2. This is also true of our spiritual experience. 3. The same holds good as to individuality of character. III. Every creature that God has made is provided with shelter. IV. For each creature the shelter is appropriate. V. Each creature uses its shelter.

Verse 19.—I. The wisdom of God as displayed in the material heavens. In the changes of the moon and the variety of the seasons. II. The goodness of God as there displayed. In the adaptation of these changes to the wants and enjoyments of men. III. The faithfulness of God as there displayed. Inspiring confidence in his creatures by their regularity.

> "So like the sun may I fulfil
> The appointed duties of the day;
> With ready mind and active will
> March on and keep my heavenly way."

Verse 20.—Darkness and the beasts that creep forth therein. 1. Ignorance of God, and unrestrained lusts. Rom. i. 2. Sins discovered. Beasts there before, but not noticed, now terrify man. 3. Spiritual despondency, dismay, despair, etc. 4. Church lethargy. All sorts of heresies, etc., begin to creep forth. 5. Papal influence. Monks, friars, priests, etc., creep about in this dark age.—*A. G. Brown.*

Verses 20—23.—I. Night work is for wild beasts: "Thou makest darkness," etc. II. Day work is for men: "Man goeth forth," etc. Good men do their work by day; bad men by night: their work is in the dark. Ministers who creep into their studies by night, and "roar after their prey," and "seek their meat from God, are more like wild beasts than rational men.—*G. R.*

Verse 21.—Inarticulate prayers, or how faulty the expression may be and yet how real the prayer in the esteem of God.

Verse 22.—From the effect of sunrise on the beasts of prey, exhibit the influence of Divine Grace on our evil passions.—*C. A. D.*

Verse 23.—"*Early Closing.*" A sermon preached on behalf of the "Early Closing Association," by *James Hamilton*, D.D., 1850. In the "Pulpit," Vol. 57.

Verse 24.—I. The language of wonder: "O Lord, how manifold," etc. Their number, variety, co-operation, harmony. II. Of admiration: "In wisdom," etc. Everywhere the same wisdom displayed. God, says Dr. Chalmers, is as great in minutiæ as in magnitude. III. Of gratitude: "The earth is full," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 24.—I. The works of the Lord are multitudinous and varied. II. They are so constructed as to show the most consummate wisdom in their *design*, and in the *end* for which they are formed. III. They are all God's *property*, and should be used only in reference to the end for which they were created. All *abuse* and *waste* of God's creatures are spoil and robbery on the property of the Creator.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 26.—"*There go the ships.*" (See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1,259.) I. We see that the ships go. 1. The ships are intended for going. 2. The ships in going at last disappear from view. 3. The ships as they go are going upon business. 4. The ships sail upon a changeful sea. II. How go the ships? 1. They must go according to the wind. 2. But still the mariner does not go by the wind without exertion on his own part. 3. They have to be guided and steered by the helm. 4. He who manages the helm seeks direction from charts and lights. 5. They go according to their build. III. Let us signal them. 1. Who is your owner? 2. What is your cargo? 3. Where are you going?

Verses 27—30.—Trace the analogy in the spiritual world. The saints waiting, v. 27; their sustenance from the opened hand, v. 28; their trouble under the hidden face; their death if the Spirit were gone, v. 29; their revival when the Spirit returns, v. 30.

Verses 29, 30.—I. The commencement of life is from God: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit," etc. II. The continuance of life is from God: "Thou renewest," etc. III. The decline of life is from God: "Thou hidest thy face," etc. IV. The cessation of life is from God: "Thou takest away their breath," etc. V. The resurrection of life is from God: "Thou renewest," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 30.—The season of Spring and its moral analogies. See John Foster's "Lectures," 1844.

Verse 32.—I. What there is in a Look of God. "He looketh," etc. 1. What in a look of anger. 2. What in a look of love. He looked out of the fiery pillar upon the Egyptians. "The Lord hath looked out from his pillar of glory," etc. He gave another look from the same pillar to Israel. II. What there is in a Touch of God: "He toucheth," etc. A touch of his may raise a soul to heaven, or sink a soul to hell.—*G. R.*

Verse 33.—I. The singer—"I." II. The song—"praises." III. The audience—"The Lord," "*My* God." IV. The length of the song—"long as I live; while I have my being."—*A. G. B.*

Verse 33.—Two "I wills." 1. Because he made me live. II. Because he has made me to live in him. III. Because he is JEHOVAH and "my God." IV. Because I shall live for ever, in the best sense.

Verse 34.—I. David's contemplation. II. David's exultation.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 35.—I. They who praise not God are not fit to be on the earth: "Let the sinners be consumed," etc. II. Much less are they fit to be in heaven. III. They who praise God are fit both for earth and heaven. Though others do not praise him here, the saints will. "Bless thou the Lord," etc. 1. In opposition to others, they praise him on earth. 2. In harmony with others, they praise him in heaven, etc. Everywhere it is with them, "Praise ye the Lord."—*G. R.*

PSALM CV.

This historical psalm was evidently composed by King David, for the first fifteen verses of it were used as a hymn at the carrying up of the ark from the house of Obed-edom, and we read in 1 Chron. xvi. 7, "Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren." Such a song was suitable for the occasion, for it describes the movements of the Lord's people and his guardian care over them in every place, and all this on account of the covenant of which the ark, then removing, was a symbol. Our last psalm sang the opening chapters of Genesis, and this takes up its closing chapters and conducts us into Exodus and Numbers.

The first verses are full of joyful praise, and call upon the people to extol Jehovah, 1—7; then the earliest days of the infant nation are described, 8—15; the going into Egypt, 16—23, the coming forth from it with the Lord's outstretched arm, 24—38, the journeying through the wilderness and the entrance into Canaan.

We are now among the long Psalms, as at other times we have been among the short ones. These varying lengths of the sacred poems should teach us not to lay down any law either of brevity or prolixity in either prayer or praise. Short petitions and single verses of hymns are often the best for public occasions, but there are seasons when a whole night of wrestling or an entire day of psalm singing will be none too long. The Spirit is ever free in his operations, and is not to be confined within the rules of conventional propriety. The wind bloweth as it listeth, and at one time rushes in short and rapid sweep, while at another it continues to refresh the earth hour after hour with its reviving breath.

EXPOSITION.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.

2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.

3 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

4 Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.

5 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

7 He *is* the LORD our God: his judgments *are* in all the earth.

1. "*O give thanks unto the* LORD." Jehovah is the author of all our benefits, therefore let him have all our gratitude. "*Call upon his name*," or call him by his name; proclaim his titles and fill the world with his renown. "*Make known his deeds among the people*," or among the nations. Let the heathen hear of our God, that they may forsake their idols and learn to worship him. The removal of the ark was a fit occasion for proclaiming aloud the glories of the Great King, and for publishing to all mankind the greatness of his doings, for it had a history in connection with the nations which it was well for them to remember with reverence. The rest of the psalm is a sermon, of which these first verses constitute the text.

2. "*Sing unto him.*" Bring your best thoughts and express them in the best language to the sweetest sounds. Take care that your singing is "unto him,"

and not merely for the sake of the music or to delight the ears of others. Singing is so delightful an exercise that it is a pity so much of it should be wasted upon trifles or worse than trifles. O ye who can emulate the nightingale, and almost rival the angels, we do most earnestly pray that your hearts may be renewed that so your floods of melody may be poured out at your Maker's and Redeemer's feet. "*Talk ye of all his wondrous works.*" Men love to speak of marvels, and others are generally glad to hear of surprising things; surely the believer in the living God has before him the most amazing series of wonders ever heard of or imagined, his themes are inexhaustible and they are such as should hold men spellbound. We ought to have more of this "talk": no one would be blamed as a Mr. Talkative if this were his constant theme. Talk ye, all of you: you all know something by experience of the marvellous loving-kindness of the Lord—"talk *ye.*" In this way, by all dwelling on this blessed subject, "*all*" his wondrous works will be published. One cannot do it, nor ten thousand times ten thousand, but if all speak to the Lord's honour, they will at least come nearer to accomplishing the deed. We ought to have a wide range when conversing upon the Lord's doings, and should not shut our eyes to any part of them. Talk ye of his wondrous works in creation and in grace, in judgment and in mercy, in providential interpositions and in spiritual comfortings; leave out none, or it will be to your damage. Obedience to this verse will give every sanctified tongue some work to do: the trained musicians can sing, and the commoner voices can talk, and in both ways the Lord will receive a measure of the thanks due to him, and his deeds will be made known among the people.

3. "*Glory ye in his holy name.*" Make it a matter of joy that you have such a God. His character and attributes are such as will never make you blush to call him your God. Idolaters may well be ashamed of the actions attributed to their fancied deities, their names are foul with lust and red with blood, but Jehovah is wholly glorious; every deed of his will bear the strictest scrutiny; his name is holy, his character is holy, his law is holy, his government is holy, his influence is holy. In all this we may make our boast, nor can any deny our right to do so. "*Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the* LORD." If they have not yet found him so fully as they desire, yet even to be allowed and enabled to seek after such a God is cause for gladness. To worship the Lord and seek his kingdom and righteousness is the sure way to happiness, and indeed there is no other. True seekers throw their hearts into the engagement, hence their hearts receive joy; according to the text they have a permit to rejoice and they have the promise that they shall do so. How gladsome all these sentences are! Where can men's ears be when they talk of the gloom of psalm-singing? What worldly songs are fuller of real mirth? One hears the sound of the timbrel and the harp in every verse. Even seekers find bliss in the name of the Lord Jesus, but as for the finders, we may say with the poet,

> "And those who find thee find a bliss,
> Nor tongue nor pen can show:
> The love of Jesus what it is,
> None but his loved ones know."

4. "*Seek the* LORD *and his strength.*" Put yourselves under his protection. Regard him not as a puny God, but look unto his omnipotence, and seek to know the power of his grace. We all need strength; let us look to the strong One for it. We need infinite power to bear us safely to our eternal resting-place, let us look to the Almighty Jehovah for it. "*Seek his face evermore.*" Seek, seek, seek, we have the word three times, and though the words differ in the Hebrew, the sense is the same. It must be a blessed thing to *seek*, or we should not be thus stirred up to do so. To seek his face is to desire his presence, his smile, his favour consciously enjoyed. First we seek *him*, then *his strength* and then *his face;* from the personal reverence, we pass on to the imparted power, and then to the conscious favour. This seeking must never cease—the more we know the more we must seek to know. Finding him, we must "our

minds inflame to seek him more and more." He seeks spiritual worshippers, and spiritual worshippers seek him; they are therefore sure to meet face to face ere long.

5. "*Remember his marvellous works that he hath done.*" Memory is never better employed than upon such topics. Alas, we are far more ready to recollect foolish and evil things than to retain in our minds the glorious deeds of Jehovah. If we would keep these in remembrance our faith would be stronger, our gratitude warmer, our devotion more fervent, and our love more intense. Shame upon us that we should let slip what it would seem impossible to forget. We ought to need no exhortation to remember such wonders, especially as he has wrought them all on the behalf of his people. "*His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth*"—these also should be had in memory. The judgments of his mouth are as memorable as the marvels of his hand. God had but to speak and the enemies of his people were sorely afflicted; his threats were not mere words, but smote his adversaries terribly. As the Word of God is the salvation of his saints, so is it the destruction of the ungodly: out of his mouth goeth a two-edged sword with which he will slay the wicked.

6. "*O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.*" Should all the world forget, ye are bound to remember. Your father Abraham saw his wonders and judgments upon Sodom, and upon the kings who came from far, and Jacob also saw the Lord's marvellous works in visiting the nations with famine, yet providing for his chosen a choice inheritance in a goodly land; therefore let the children praise their father's God. The Israelites were the Lord's elect nation, and they were bound to imitate their progenitor, who was the Lord's faithful servant and walked before him in holy faith: the seed of Abraham should not be unbelieving, nor should the children of so true a servant become rebels. As we read this pointed appeal to the chosen seed we should recognise the special claims which the Lord has upon ourselves, since we too have been favoured above all others. Election is not a couch for ease, but an argument for seven-fold diligence. If God has set his choice upon us, let us aim to be choice men.

7. "*He is the* LORD *our God.*" Blessed be his name. Jehovah condescends to be *our* God. This sentence contains a greater wealth of meaning than all the eloquence of orators can compass, and there is more joy in it than in all the sonnets of them that make merry. "*His judgments are in all the earth,*" or *in all the land*, for the whole of the country was instructed by his law, ruled by his statutes, and protected by his authority. What a joy it is that our God is never absent from us, he is never non-resident, never an absentee ruler, his judgments are in all the places in which we dwell. If the second clause of this verse refers to the whole world, it is very beautiful to see the speciality of Israel's election united with the universality of Jehovah's reign. Not alone to the one nation did the Lord reveal himself, but his glory flashed around the globe. It is wonderful that the Jewish people should have become so exclusive, and have so utterly lost the missionary spirit, for their sacred literature is full of the broad and generous sympathies which are so consistent with the worship of "the God of the whole earth." Nor is it less painful to observe that among a certain class of believers in God's election of grace there lingers a hard exclusive spirit, fatal to compassion and zeal. It would be well for these also to remember that their Redeemer is "the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe."

8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations.

9 Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;

10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant:

11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance :

12 When they were *but* a few men in number ; yea, very few, and strangers in it.

13 When they went from one nation to another, from *one* kingdom to another people ;

14 He suffered no man to do them wrong : yea, he reproved kings for their sakes ;

15 *Saying,* Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

8. "*He hath remembered his covenant for ever.*" Here is the basis of all his dealings with his people : he had entered into covenant with them in their father Abraham, and to this covenant he remained faithful. The exhortation to *remember* (in verse 5) receives great force from the fact that God has remembered. If the Lord has his promise in memory surely we ought not to forget the wonderful manner in which he keeps it. To us it should be matter for deepest joy that never in any instance has the Lord been unmindful of his covenant engagements, nor will he be so world without end. O that we were as mindful of them as he is. "*The word which he commanded to a thousand generations.*" This is only an amplification of the former statement, and serves to set before us the immutable fidelity of the Lord during the changing generations of men. His judgments are threatened upon the third and fourth generations of them that hate him, but his love runs on for ever, even to "a thousand generations." His promise is here said to be *commanded*, or vested with all the authority of a law. It is a proclamation from a sovereign, the *firman* of an Emperor, whose laws shall stand fast in every jot and tittle though heaven and earth shall pass away. Therefore let us give thanks unto the Lord and talk of all his wondrous works, so wonderful for their faithfulness and truth.

9. "*Which covenant he made with Abraham.*" When the victims were divided and the burning lamp passed between the pieces (Gen. xv.) then the Lord made, or ratified, the covenant with the patriarch. This was a solemn deed, performed not without blood, and the cutting in pieces of the sacrifice ; it points us to the greater covenant which in Christ Jesus is signed, sealed, and ratified, that it may stand fast for ever and ever. "*And his oath unto Isaac.*" Isaac did not in vision see the solemn making of the covenant, but the Lord renewed unto him his oath (Gen. xxvi. 2—5.). This was enough for him, and must have established his faith in the Most High. We have the privilege of seeing in our Lord Jesus both the sacrificial seal, and the eternal oath of God, by which every promise of the covenant is made yea and amen to all the chosen seed.

10. "*And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law.*" Jacob in his wondrous dream (Gen. xxviii. 10—15) received a pledge that the Lord's mode of procedure with him would be in accordance with covenant relations : for said Jehovah, "I will not leave thee till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Thus, if we may so speak with all reverence, the covenant became a law unto the Lord himself by which he bound himself to act. O matchless condescension, that the most free and sovereign Lord should put himself under covenant bonds to his chosen, and make a law for himself, though he is above all law. "*And to Israel for an everlasting covenant.*" When he changed Jacob's name he did not change his covenant, but it is written, "he blessed him there" (Gen. xxxii. 29), and it was with the old blessing, according to the unchangeable word of abiding grace.

11, 12. "*Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*" This repetition of the great covenant promise is recorded in

Gen. xxxv. 9—12 in connection with the change of Jacob's name, and very soon after that slaughter of the Shechemites, which had put the patriarch into such great alarm and caused him to use language almost identical with that of the next verse. "*When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.*" Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, and my house." Thus the fears of the man of God declared themselves, and they were reasonable if we look only at the circumstances in which he was placed, but they are soon seen to be groundless when we remember that the covenant promise, which guaranteed the possession of the land, necessarily implied the preservation of the race to whom the promise was made. We often fear where no fear is.

The blessings promised to the seed of Abraham were not dependent upon the number of his descendants, or their position in this world. The covenant was made with one man, and consequently the number could never be less, and that one man was not the owner of a foot of soil in all the land, save only a cave in which to bury his dead, and therefore his seed could not have less inheritance than he. The smallness of a church, and the poverty of its members, are no barriers to the divine blessing, if it be sought earnestly by pleading the promise. Were not the apostles few, and the disciples feeble, when the good work began? Neither because we are strangers and foreigners here below, as our fathers were, are we in any the more danger: we are like sheep in the midst of wolves, but the wolves cannot hurt us, for our shepherd is near.

13. "*When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people.*" Migrating as the patriarchs did from the region of one tribe to the country of another they were singularly preserved. The little wandering family might have been cut off root and branch had not a special mandate been issued from the throne for their protection. It was not the gentleness of their neighbors which screened them; they were hedged about by the mysterious guardianship of heaven. Whether in Egypt, or in Philistia, or in Canaan, the heirs of the promises, dwelling in their tents, were always secure.

14. "*He suffered no man to do them wrong.*" Men cannot wrong us unless he suffers them to do so; the greatest of them must wait his permission before they can place a finger upon us. The wicked would devour us if they could, but they cannot even cheat us of a farthing without divine sufferance. "*Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes.*" Pharaoh and Abimelech must both be made to respect the singular strangers who had come to sojourn in their land; the greatest kings are very second-rate persons with God in comparison with his chosen servants.

15. "*Saying, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*" Abraham and his seed were in the midst of the world a generation of priests anointed to present sacrifice unto the Most High God; since to them the oracles were committed, they were also the prophets of mankind; and they were kings too —a royal priesthood; hence they had received a threefold anointing. Their holy office surrounded them with a sacredness which rendered it sacrilege to molest them. The Lord was pleased to impress the wild tribes of Canaan with a respectful awe of the pious strangers who had come to abide with them, so that they came not near them to do them ill. The words here mentioned may not have been actually spoken, but the impression of awe which fell upon the nations is thus poetically described. God will not have those touched who have been set apart unto himself. He calls them his own, saying, "*Mine* anointed;" he declares that he has "*anointed*" them to be prophets, priests, and kings unto himself, and yet again he claims them as *his* prophets—"Do *my prophets* no harm." All through the many years in which the three great fathers dwelt in Canaan no man was able to injure them; they were not able to defend themselves by force of arms, but the eternal God was their refuge. Even so at this present time the

remnant according to the election of grace cannot be destroyed, nay, nor so much as touched, without the divine consent. Against the church of Christ the gates of hell cannot prevail. In all this we see reasons for giving thanks unto the Lord, and proclaiming his name according to the exhortation of the first verse of the Psalm. Here ends the portion which was sung at the moving of the ark: its fitness to be used for such a purpose is very manifest, for the ark was the symbol both of the covenant and of that mystic dwelling of God with Israel which was at once her glory and her defence. None could touch the Lord's peculiar ones, for the Lord was among them, flaming forth in majesty between the cherubims.

16 Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.

17 He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant:

18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:

19 Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.

20 The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free.

21 He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:

22 To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

The presence of God having remained with his chosen ones while they sojourned in Canaan, it did not desert them when they were called to go down into Egypt. They did not go there of their own choice, but under divine direction, and hence the Lord prepared their way and prospered them until he saw fit to conduct them again to the land of promise.

16. "*Moreover he called for a famine upon the land.*" He had only to call for it as a man calls for his servant, and it came at once. How grateful ought we to be that he does not often call in that terrible servant of his, so meagre and gaunt, and grim, so pitiless to the women and the children, so bitter to the strong men, who utterly fail before it. "*He brake the whole staff of bread.*" Man's feeble life cannot stand without its staff—if bread fail him he fails. As a cripple with a broken staff falls to the ground, so does man when bread no longer sustains him. To God it is as easy to make a famine as to break a staff. He could make that famine universal, too, so that all countries should be in like case: then would the race of man fall indeed, and its staff would be broken for ever. There is this sweet comfort in the matter, that the Lord has wise ends to serve even by famine: he meant his people to go down into Egypt, and the scarcity of food was his method of leading them there, for "they heard that there was corn in Egypt."

17. "*He sent a man before them, even Joseph.*" He was the advance guard and pioneer for the whole clan. His brethren sold him, but God sent him. Where the hand of the wicked is visible God's hand may be invisibly at work, overruling their malice. No one was more of *a man*, or more fit to lead the van than Joseph: an interpreter of dreams was wanted, and his brethren had said of him, "Behold, this dreamer cometh." "*Who was sold for a servant,*" or rather for a slave. Joseph's journey into Egypt was not so costly as Jonah's voyage when he paid his own fare: his free passage was provided by the Midianites, who also secured his introduction to a great officer of state by handing

him over as a slave. His way to a position in which he could feed his family lay through the pit, the slaver's caravan, the slave market and the prison, and who shall deny but what it was the right way, the surest way, the wisest way, and perhaps the shortest way. Yet assuredly it seemed not so. Were we to send a man on such an errand we should furnish him with money—Joseph goes as a pauper ; we should clothe him with authority—Joseph goes as a slave ; we should leave him at full liberty—Joseph is a bondman : yet money would have been of little use when corn was so dear, authority would have been irritating rather than influential with Pharaoh, and freedom might not have thrown Joseph into connection with Pharaoh's captain and his other servants, and so the knowledge of his skill in interpretation might not have reached the monarch's ear. God way is *the* way. Our Lord's path to his mediatorial throne ran by the cross of Calvary ; our road to glory runs by the rivers of grief.

18. "*Whose feet they hurt with fetters.*" From this we learn a little more of Joseph's sufferings than we find in the book of Genesis : inspiration had not ceased, and David was as accurate an historian as Moses, for the same Spirit guided his pen. "*He was laid in iron,*" or "into iron came his soul." The prayer book version, "the iron entered into his soul," is ungrammatical, but probably expresses much the same truth. His fetters hurt his mind as well as his body, and well did Jacob say, "The archers shot at him, and sorely grieved him." Under the cruelly false accusation, which he could not disprove, his mind was, as it were, belted and bolted around with iron, and had not the Lord been with him he might have sunk under his sufferings. In all this, and a thousand things besides, he was an admirable type of him who in the highest sense is "the Shepherd, the stone of Israel." The iron fetters were preparing him to wear chains of gold, and making his feet ready to stand on high places. It is even so with all the Lord's afflicted ones, they too shall one day step from their prisons to their thrones.

19. "*Until the time that his word came.*" God has his times, and his children must wait till his "until" is fulfilled. Joseph was tried as in a furnace, until the Lord's assaying work was fully accomplished. The word of the chief butler was nothing, he had to wait until God's word came, and meanwhile "*the word of the* LORD *tried him.*" He believed the promise, but his faith was sorely exercised. A delayed blessing tests men, and proves their metal, whether their faith is of that precious kind which can endure the fire. Of many a choice promise we may say with Daniel "the thing was true, but the time appointed was long." If the vision tarry it is good to wait for it with patience. There is a trying word and a delivering word, and we must bear the one till the other comes to us. How meekly Joseph endured his afflictions, and with what fortitude he looked forward to the clearing of his slandered character we may readily imagine : it will be better still if under similar trials we are able to imitate him, and come forth from the furnace as thoroughly purified as he was, and as well prepared to bear the yet harder ordeal of honour and power.

20. "*The king sent and loosed him.*" He was thrust into the roundhouse by an officer, but he was released by the monarch himself. "*Even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.*" The tide had turned, so that Egypt's haughty potentate gave him a call from the prison to the palace. He had interpreted the dreams of captives, himself a captive ; he must now interpret for a ruler and become a ruler himself. When God means to enlarge his prisoners, kings become his turnkeys.

21. "*He made him lord of his house.*" Reserving no power, but saying "only in the throne will I be greater than thou." The servitor of slaves becomes lord over nobles. How soon the Lord lifteth his chosen from the dunghill to set them among princes. "*And ruler of all his substance.*" He empowered him to manage the storing of the seven plenteous harvests, and to dispense the provisions in the coming days of scarcity. All the treasures of Egypt were under his lock and key, yea, the granaries of the world were sealed or opened at his bidding. Thus was he in the best conceivable position for preserving alive the

house of Israel with whom the covenant was made. As our Lord was himself secured in Egypt from Herod's enmity, so, ages before, the redeemed race found an equally available shelter, in the hour of need. God has always a refuge for his saints, and if the whole earth could not afford them sanctuary, the Lord himself would be their dwelling-place, and take them up to lie in his own bosom. We are always sure to be fed if all the world should starve. It is delightful to think of our greater Joseph ruling the nations for the good of his own household, and it becomes us to abide in quiet confidence in every political disaster, since Jesus is on the throne of providence, King of kings and Lord of lords, and will be so till this dispensation ends.

22. "*To bind his princes at his pleasure.*" He who was bound obtains authority to bind. He is no longer kept in prison, but keeps all the prisons, and casts into them the greatest nobles when justice demands it. "*And teach his senators wisdom.*" The heads of the various peoples, the elders of the nations, learned from him the science of government, the art of providing for the people. Joseph was a great instructor in political economy, and we doubt not that he mingled with it the purest morals, the most upright jurisprudence, and something of that divine wisdom without which the most able senators remain in darkness. The king's authority made him absolute both in the executive and in the legislative courts, and the Lord instructed him to use his power with discretion. What responsibilities and honours loaded the man who had been rejected by his brothers, and sold for twenty pieces of silver! What glories crown the head of that greater one who was "separated from his brethren."

23. "*Israel also came into Egypt.*" The aged patriarch came, and with him that increasing company which bore his name. He was hard to bring there. Perhaps nothing short of the hope of seeing Joseph could have drawn him to take so long a journey from the tombs of his forefathers; but the divine will was accomplished and the church of God was removed into an enemy's country, where for a while it was nourished. "*And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.*" Shem the blessed came to lodge awhile with Ham the accursed: the dove was in the vulture's nest. God so willed it for a time, and therefore it was safe and right: still it was only a sojourn, not a settlement. The fairest Goshen in Egypt was not the covenant blessing, neither did the Lord mean his people to think it so; even so to us "earth is our lodge" but only our lodge, for heaven is our home. When we are best housed we ought still to remember that here we have no continuing city. It were ill news for us if we were doomed to reside in Egypt for ever, for all its riches are not worthy to be compared with the reproach of Christ.

Thus the song rehearsed the removals of the Lord's people, and was a most fit accompaniment to the upbearing of the ark, as the priest carried it into the city of David, where the Lord had appointed it a resting-place.

24 And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

25 He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

26 He sent Moses his servant; *and* Aaron whom he had chosen.

27 They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.

29 He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.

30 Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.

31 He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coasts.

32 He gave them hail for rain, *and* flaming fire in their land.

33 He smote their vines also and their fig-trees; and brake the trees of their coasts.

34 He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number.

35 And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

36 He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.

37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was* not one feeble *person* among their tribes.

38 Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

24. "*And he increased his people greatly.*" In Goshen they seem to have increased rapidly from the first, and this excited the fears of the Egyptians, so that they tried to retard their increase by oppression, but the Lord continued to bless them, "*And made them stronger than their enemies.*" Both in physical strength and in numbers they threatened to become the more powerful race. Nor was this growth of the nation impeded by tyrannical measures, but the very reverse took place, thus giving an early instance of what has since become a proverb in the church—"the more they oppressed them the more they multiplied." It is idle to contend either with God or his people.

25. "*He turned their hearts to hate his people.*" It was his goodness to Israel which called forth the ill-will of the Egyptian court, and so far the Lord caused it, and moreover he made use of this feeling to lead on to the discomfort of his people, and so to their readiness to leave the land to which they had evidently become greatly attached. Thus far but no further did the Lord turn the hearts of the Egyptians. God cannot in any sense be the author of sin so far as to be morally responsible for its existence, but it often happens through the evil which is inherent in human nature that the acts of the Lord arouse the ill-feelings of ungodly men. Is the sun to be blamed because while it softens wax it hardens clay? Is the orb of day to be accused of creating the foul exhalations which are drawn by its warmth from the pestilential marsh? The sun causes the reek of the dunghill only in a certain sense, had it been a bed of flowers his beams would have called forth fragrance. The evil is in men, and the honour of turning it to good and useful purposes is with the Lord. Hatred is often allied with cunning, and so in the case of the Egyptians, they began "*to deal subtilly with his servants.*" They treated them in a fraudulent manner, they reduced them to bondage by their exactions, they secretly concerted the destruction of their male children, and at length openly ordained that cruel measure, and all with the view of checking their increase, lest in time of war they should side with invaders in order to obtain their liberty. Surely the depths of Satanic policy were here reached, but vain was the cunning of man against the chosen seed.

26. "*He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.*" When the oppression was at the worst, Moses came. For the second time we have here the expression, "he sent"; he who sent Joseph sent also Moses and his eloquent brother. The Lord had the men in readiness and all he had to do was to commission them and thrust them forward. They were two, for mutual comfort and strength, even as the apostles and the seventy in our Lord's day were sent forth two and two. The men differed, and so the one became the supplement of the other, and together they were able to accomplish far more than if they

had been exactly alike: the main point was that they were both *sent*, and hence both clothed with divine might.

27. "*They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.*" The miracles which were wrought by Moses were the Lord's, not his own: hence they are here called "*his* signs," as being the marks of Jehovah's presence and power. The plagues were "words of his signs" (see margin), that is to say, they were speaking marvels, which testified more plainly than words to the omnipotence of Jehovah, to his determination to be obeyed, to his anger at the obstinacy of Pharaoh. Never were discourses more plain, pointed, personal, or powerful, and yet it took ten of them to accomplish the end designed. In the preaching of the gospel there are words, and signs, and wonders, and these leave men without excuse for their impenitence; to have the kingdom of God come nigh unto them, and yet to remain rebellious is the unhappy sin of obstinate spirits. Those are wonders of sin who see wonders of grace, and yet are unaffected by them: bad as he was, Pharaoh had not this guilt, for the prodigies which he beheld were marvels of judgment and not of mercy.

28. "*He sent darkness, and made it dark.*" It was no natural or common darkness to be accounted for by the blinding dust of the simoon, it was beyond all precedent and out of the range of ordinary events. It was a horrible palpable obscurity which men felt clinging about them as though it were a robe of death. It was a thick darkness, a total darkness, a darkness which lasted three days, a darkness in which no one dared to stir. What a condition to be in! This plague is first mentioned, though it is not first in order, because it fitly describes all the period of the plagues: the land was in the darkness of sorrow, and in the darkness of sin all the time. If we shudder as we think of that long and terrible gloom, let us reflect upon the gross darkness which still covers heathen lands as the result of sin, for it is one of the chief plagues which iniquity creates for itself. May the day soon come when the people which sit in darkness shall see a great light. "*And they rebelled not against his word.*" Moses and Aaron did as they were bidden, and during the darkness the Egyptians were so cowed that even when it cleared away they were anxious for Israel to be gone, and had it not been for the pride of Pharaoh they would have rejoiced to speed them on their journey there and then. God can force men to obey, and even make the stoutest hearts eager to pay respect to his will, for fear his plagues should be multiplied. Possibly, however, the sentence before us neither refers to Moses nor the Egyptians, but to the plagues which came at the Lord's bidding. The darkness, the hail, the frogs, the murrain, were all so many obedient servants of the great Lord of all.

29. "*He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.*" So that the plague was not a mere colouring of the water with red earth, as some suppose, but the river was offensive and fatal to the fish. The beloved Nile and other streams were all equally tainted and ensanguined. Their commonest mercy became their greatest curse. Water is one of the greatest blessings, and the more plentiful it is the better, but blood is a hideous sight to look upon, and to see rivers and pools of it is frightful indeed. Fish in Egypt furnished a large part of the food supply, and it was no small affliction to see them floating dead and white upon a stream of crimson. The hand of the Lord thus smote them where all classes of the people would become aware of it and suffer from it.

30. "*Their land brought forth frogs in abundance.*" If fish could not live frogs might, yea, they multiplied both on land and in the water till they swarmed beyond all count. "*In the chambers of their kings.*" They penetrated the choicest rooms of the palace, and were found upon the couches of state. The Lord called for them and they marched forth. Obnoxious and even loathsome their multitudes became, but there was no resisting them; they seemed to spring out of the ground, the very land brought them forth. Their universal presence must have inspired horror and disgust which would cause sickness and make life a burden; their swarming even in the king's own chambers was a rebuke to his face, which his pride must have felt. Kings are no more than other men

with God, nay less than others when they are first in rebellion ; if the frogs had abounded elsewhere, but had been kept out of his select apartments, the monarch would have cared little, for he was a heartless being, but God took care that there should be a special horde of the invaders for the palace ; they were more than ordinarily abundant in the chambers of their kings.

31. "*He spake.*" See the power of the divine word. He had only to say it and it was done : "*and there came divers sorts of flies.*" Insects of various annoying kinds came up in infinite hordes, a mixture of biting, stinging, buzzing gnats, musquitos, flies, beetles, and other vermin such as make men's flesh their prey, the place of deposit for their eggs, and the seat of peculiar torments. "*And lice in all their coasts.*" These unutterably loathsome forms of life were as the dust of the ground, and covered their persons, their garments, and all they ate. Nothing is too small to master man when God commands it to assail him. The sons of Ham had despised the Israelites and now they were made to loathe themselves. The meanest beggars were more approachable than the proud Egyptians : they were reduced to the meanest condition of filthiness, and the most painful state of irritation. What armies the Lord can send forth when once his right arm is bared for war ! And what scorn he pours on proud nations when he fights them, not with angels, but with lice ! Pharaoh had little left to be proud of when his own person was invaded by filthy parasites. It was a slap in the face which ought to have humbled his heart, but, alas, man, when he is altogether polluted, still maintains his self-conceit, and when he is the most disgusting object in the universe he still vaunts himself. Surely pride is moral madness.

32. "*He gave them hail for rain.*" They seldom had rain, but now the showers assumed the form of heavy, destructive hail-storms, and being accompanied with a hurricane and thunderstorm, they were overwhelming, terrible, and destructive. "*And flaming fire in their land.*" The lightning was peculiarly vivid, and seemed to run along upon the ground, or fall in fiery flakes. Thus all the fruit of the trees and the harvests of the fields were either broken to pieces or burned on the spot, and universal fear bowed the hearts of men to the dust. No phenomena are more appalling to the most of mankind than those which attend a thunderstorm ; even the most audacious blasphemers quail when the dread artillery of heaven opens fire upon the earth.

33. "*He smote their vines also and their fig trees.*" So that all hope of gathering their best fruits was gone, and the trees were injured for future bearing. All the crops were destroyed, and these are mentioned as being the more prominent forms of their produce, used by them both at festivals and in common meals. "*And brake the trees of their coasts.*" From end to end of Egypt the trees were battered and broken by the terrible hailstorm. God is in earnest when he deals with proud spirits, he will either end them or mend them.

34, 35. "*He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number.*" One word from the Captain and the armies leap forward. The expression is very striking, and sets forth the immediate result of the divine word. The caterpillar is called *the licker*, because it seems to lick up every green thing as in a moment. Perhaps the caterpillar here meant is still the locust in another form. That locusts swarm in countless armies is a fact of ordinary observation, and the case would be worse on this occasion. We have ourselves ridden for miles through armies of locusts, and we have seen with our own eyes how completely they devour every green thing. The description is not strained when we read, "*And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.*" Nothing escapes these ravenous creatures, they even climb the trees to reach any remnant of foliage which may survive. Commissioned as these were by God, we may be sure they would do their work thoroughly, and leave behind them nothing but a desolate wilderness.

36. "*He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.*" Now came the master blow. The Lord spoke before, but now he smites ; before he only smote vines, but now he strikes men themselves. The glory of the

household dies in a single night, the prime and pick of the nation are cut off, the flower of the troops, the heirs of the rich, and the hopes of the poor all die at midnight. Now the target was struck in the centre, there was no confronting this plague. Pharaoh feels it as much as the woman-slave at the mill; he had smitten Israel, the Lord's firstborn, and the Lord repaid him to his face. What a cry went up throughout the land of Egypt when every house wailed its firstborn at the dead of night! O Jehovah, thou didst triumph in that hour, and with an outstretched arm didst thou deliver thy people.

37. "*He brought them forth also with silver and gold.*" This they asked of the Egyptians, perhaps even demanded, and well they might, for they had been robbed and spoiled for many a day, and it was not meet that they should go forth empty handed. Glad were the Egyptians to hand over their jewels to propitiate a people who had such a terrible friend above; they needed no undue pressure, they feared them too much to deny them their requests. The Israelites were compelled to leave their houses and lands behind them, and it was but justice that they should be able to turn these into portable property. "*And there was not one feeble person among their tribes*"—a great marvel indeed. The number of their army was very great and yet there was not one in hospital, not one carried in an ambulance, or limping in the rear. Poverty and oppression had not enfeebled them. JEHOVAH ROPHI had healed them; they carried none of the diseases of Egypt with them, and felt none of the exhaustion which sore bondage produces. When God calls his people to a long journey he fits them for it; in the pilgrimage of life our strength shall be equal to our day. See the contrast between Egypt and Israel—in Egypt one dead in every house, and among the Israelites not one so much as limping.

38. "*Egypt was glad when they departed,*" which would not have been the case had the gold and silver been borrowed by the Israelites, for men do not like to see borrowers carry their goods into a far country. The awe of God was on Egypt, and they feared his people and were glad to pay them to be gone. What a change from the time when the sons of Jacob were the drudges of the land, the offscouring of all things, the brickmakers whose toil was only requited by the lash or the stick. Now they were reverenced as prophets and priests; "*for the fear of them fell upon them,*" the people proceeded even to a superstitious terror of them. Thus with cheers and good wishes their former taskmasters sent them on their way: Pharaoh was foiled and the chosen people were once more on the move, journeying to the place which the Lord had given to them by a covenant of salt. "O give thanks unto Jehovah; call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people."

39 He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.

40 *The people* asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.

41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places *like* a river.

42 For he remembered his holy promise, *and* Abraham his servant.

43 And he brought forth his people with joy, *and* his chosen with gladness:

44 And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;

45 That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD.

39. "*He spread a cloud for a covering.*" Never people were so favoured. What would not travellers in the desert now give for such a canopy? The sun

could not scorch them with its burning ray; their whole camp was screened like a king in his pavilion. Nothing seemed to be too good for God to give his chosen nation, their comfort was studied in every way. "*And fire to give light in the night.*" While cities were swathed in darkness, their town of tents enjoyed a light which modern art with all its appliances cannot equal. God himself was their sun and shield, their glory and their defence. Could they be unbelieving while so graciously shaded, or rebellious while they walked at midnight in such a light? Alas, the tale of *their* sin is as extraordinary as this story of *His* love; but this Psalm selects the happier theme and dwells only upon covenant love and faithfulness. O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good. We, too, have found the Lord all this to us, for he has been our sun and shield, and has preserved us alike from the perils of joys and the evils of grief;

> "He hath been my joy in woe,
> Cheered my heart when it was low;
> And with warnings softly sad
> Calm'd my heart when it was glad."

So has the promise been fulfilled to us, "the sun shall not hurt thee by day, nor the moon by night."

40. "*The people asked.*" But how badly, how wickedly! And yet his grace forgave the sin of their murmuring and heard its meaning: or perhaps we may consider that while the multitude murmured there were a few, who were really gracious people, who prayed, and therefore the blessing came. "*He brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.*" He gave them what they asked amiss as well as what was good for them, mingling judgment with goodness, for their discipline. The quails were more a curse than a blessing in the end, because of their greed and lust, but in themselves they were a peculiar indulgence, and favour: it was their own fault, that the dainty meat brought death with it. As for the manna it was unmingled good to them, and really satisfied them, which the quails never did. It was bread *from* heaven, and the bread *of* heaven, sent *by* heaven; it was a pity that they were not led to look up to heaven whence it came, and fear and love the God who out of heaven rained it upon them. Thus they were housed beneath the Lord's canopy and fed with food from his own table; never people were so lodged and boarded. O house of Israel, praise ye the Lord.

41. "*He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out.*" With Moses' rod and his own word he cleft the rock in the desert, and forth leaped abundant floods for their drinking where they had feared to die of thirst. From most unlikely sources the all-sufficient God can supply his people's needs; hard rocks become springing fountains at the Lord's command. "*They ran in the dry places like a river*": so that those at a distance from the rock could stoop down and refresh themselves, and the stream flowed on, so that in future journeyings they were supplied. The desert sand would naturally swallow up the streams, and yet it did not so, the refreshing river ran "in the dry places." We know that the rock set forth our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom there flows a fountain of living waters which shall never be exhausted till the last pilgrim has crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan.

42. "*For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.*" Here is the secret reason for all this grace. The covenant and he for whose sake it was made are ever on the heart of the Most High. He remembered his people because he remembered his covenant. He could not violate that gracious compact for it was sacred to him,—"his holy promise." A holy God must keep his promise holy. In our case the Lord's eye is upon his beloved Son, and his engagements with him on our behalf, and this is the source and well-head of those innumerable favours which enrich us in all our wanderings through this life's wilderness.

43. "*And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness.*" Up from the wilderness he led them, rejoicing over them himself and making

them rejoice too. They were *his* people, *his* chosen, and hence in them he rejoiced, and upon them he showered his favours, that they might rejoice in him as their God, and their portion.

44. "*And gave them the lands of the heathen.*" He drove out the Canaanites and allotted the lands to the tribes. They were called on to fight, but the Lord wrought so wonderfully that the conquest was not effected by their bow or spear—the Lord *gave* them the land. "*And they inherited the labour of the people,*" they dwelt in houses which they had not built, and gathered fruit from vines and olives which they had not planted. They were not settled in a desert which needed to be reclaimed, but in a land fertile to a proverb, and cultivated carefully by its inhabitants. Like Adam, they were placed in a garden. This entrance into the goodly land was fitly celebrated when the ark was being moved to Zion.

45. "*That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.*" This was the practical design of it all. The chosen nation was to be the conservator of truth, the exemplar of morality, the pattern of devotion: everything was so ordered as to place them in advantageous circumstances for fulfilling this trust. Theirs was a high calling and a glorious election. It involved great responsibilities, but it was in itself a distinguished blessing, and one for which the nation was bound to give thanks. Most justly then did the music close with the jubilant but solemn shout of HALLELUJAH. "*Praise ye the Lord.*" If this history did not make Israel praise God, what would?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—This is the first of a series of "*Confitemini Domino*" Psalms, "O give thanks unto the Lord" (cv. 1; cvi. 1; cvii. 1; cxviii. 1; and cxxxvi. 1.)—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Whole Psalm.—The 105th Psalm is a meditation on the covenant as performed on the part of God, the 106th on the covenant as kept by Israel. They both dwell on the predestinating will of God, electing men to holiness and obedience, and the mode in which human sin opposes itself to that will, and yet cannot make it void.—*Plain Commentary.*

Verses 1—15.—The first fifteen verses were written at the bringing up of the Ark, 1 Chron. xvi. They tell that it is sovereign grace that ruleth over all—it is a sovereign God. Out of a fallen world he takes whom he pleases—individuals, families, nations. He chose *Israel* long ago, that they might be the objects of grace, and their land the theatre of its display. He will yet again return to Israel, when the days of his Kingdom of Glory draw near; and Israel shall have a full share—the very fullest and richest—in his blessings, temporal and spiritual.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"*Call upon his name.*" The original meaning of this phrase is *call* (*him*) *by his name*, i.e., give him the descriptive title most expressive of his divine perfections; or more specifically, call him by his name Jehovah, *i.e.*, ascribe to him the attributes which it denotes, to wit, eternity and self-existence, together with that covenant relation to his people, which though not denoted by the name was constantly associated with it, and therefore necessarily suggested by it. The meaning of the next phrase is obscured, if not entirely concealed in the common version, "*among the people.*" The plural form and sense of the original expression are essential to the writer's purpose, which is to glorify the God of Israel among the nations.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 1.—"*Make known his deeds among the people.*" The people of God were not shut up in that narrow corner of the earth for the purpose of confining

within their straitened territories the true knowledge and worship of God ; but God wished that to be the fixed seat of the church, from which the sound of heavenly doctrine should go forth into all nations. Therefore he chose Canaan, which is interjected among the most powerful nations of the world, that from it as from a fountain might more easily issue the doctrine of God to the rest of the nations : as Isaiah says, "*Out of Zion shall go forth the law.*"—*Mollerus.*

Verse 2.—"*Talk ye of all his wondrous works,*" נִפְלְאֹתָיו *niphleothaiv*, "of his miracles." Who have so many of these to boast of as Christians ! Christianity is a tissue of miracles ; and every part of the work of grace on the soul is a miracle. Genuine Christian converts may talk of miracles from morning to night ; and they *should talk of them*, and recommend to others their miracle-working God and Saviour.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2.—"*Sing*" . . . . "*talk*," etc. Music and conversation are two things by which the mind of man receiveth much good, or a great deal of harm. They who make "Jehovah" and his "wondrous works" the subject of both, enjoy a heaven upon earth. And they who do in reality love the Saviour, will always find themselves inclined to "*sing to him*," and to "*talk of him.*"—*George Horne.*

Verse 2.—"*Sing psalms.*" It is not sufficient to offer the empty vessel of our joy unto God, or our singing voice in musical tune only ; but also it is required that we fill our joyful voice with holy matter and good purpose, whereby God only may be reasonably praised : "Sing *psalms* unto him."—*David Dickson.*

Verse 2.—"*Sing psalms.*" Psalmody is the calm of the soul, the repose of the spirit, the arbiter of peace. It silences the wave, and conciliates the whirlwind of our passions, soothing the impetuous, tempering the unchaste. It is an engenderer of friendship, a healer of dissension, a reconciler of enemies. For who can longer count him his enemy, with whom to the throne of God he hath raised the strain ? Psalmody repels the demons, and lures the ministry of angels. It is a weapon of defence in nightly terrors and a respite from daily toil. To the infant it is a presiding genius ; to manhood a crown of glory ; a balm of comfort to the aged ; a congenial ornament to women.—*Basil.*

Verse 4.—"*Seek the* LORD, *and be strengthened*" ; so divers ancient versions read it. They that would be "strengthened in the inward man," must fetch in strength from God by faith and prayer. "*Seek his strength*," and then seek his face ; for by his strength we hope to prevail with him for his favour, as Jacob did, Hosea xii. 3. "*Seek his face evermore*," *i.e.*, seek to have his favour to eternity, and therefore continue seeking it to the end of the time of your probation. Seek it while you live in this world, and you shall have it while you live in the other world, and even there shall be for ever seeking it, in an infinite progression, and yet be for ever satisfied in it.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 4.—"*His strength.*" In classical language, his ægis, or protection, his ark, the symbol of the divine presence.—*John Mason Good.*

Verse 4.—"*Seek his face evermore.*" It is added "*evermore*," lest they should imagine that they had performed their duty, if they assembled twice or three times in the year at the tabernacle, and observed the external rites according to the law.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 4.—"*Seek . . . . seek.*" None do seek the Lord so earnestly, but they have need of stirring up to seek him more earnestly ; neither have any attained to such a measure of communion with God, but they have need to seek for a further measure : therefore it is said, "*Seek the Lord, seek his strength, seek his face evermore.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 5.—"*Remember.*" How others may be affected I do not ask. For myself, I confess, that there is no care or sorrow, by which I am so severely harassed, as when I feel myself guilty of ingratitude to my most kind Lord. It

not seldom appears to be a fault so inexplicable, that I am alarmed when I read these words, inasmuch as I consider them addressed to myself, and others like me. Remember, O ye forgetful, thoughtless, and ungrateful, the works of God, which he hath done to us, with so many signs and proofs of his goodness. What more could he have done, which he hath not done?—*Folengius.*

Verse 6.—"*O ye seed of Abraham his servant.*" Consider the relation ye stand in to him. Ye are "*the seed of Abraham his servant*"; you are born in his house, and being thereby entitled to the privilege of his servants, protection and provision, you are also bound to do the duty of servants, to attend your master, consult his honour, obey his commands, and do what you can to advance his interests.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 8.—"*He hath remembered his covenant.*" As a long series of years had elapsed between the promise and the performance, the prophet uses the word "*remember,*" intimating that the Divine promise does not become obsolete by length of time, but that even when the world imagines that they are extinguished and wholly forgotten, God retains as distinct a remembrance of them as ever, that he may accomplish them in due season.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 8.—"*The word which he commanded.*" All that God says must of necessity be said with authority, so that even his promises partake of the nature of commands.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 11.—"*The lot of your inheritance:*" literally חֶבֶל, *the cord of your inheritance,* an expression taken from the ancient method of measuring land by the cord or line; whence the measuring cord is *metonymically* put for the part measured, and divided by the cord. Thus, "*the lines,* חֲבָלִים, the cords, *are fallen unto me in pleasant places,*" i.e., as the psalmist explains it: "I have a goodly heritage." Ps. xvi. 6.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 11.—"YOUR *inheritance.*" The change of the number (from "thee" to "your") points out that God made a covenant with all the people in general, though he spake the words only to a few individuals; even as we have seen a little before, that it was a decree or an everlasting law. The holy patriarchs were the first and principal persons into whose hands the promise was committed; but they did not embrace the grace which was offered to them as belonging only to themselves, but as a blessing which their posterity in common with them were to become sharers of.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 12.—"*When they were but a few men in number.*" מְתֵי מִסְפָּר. Literally, *homines numeri,* men of number; so few as easily to be numbered: in opposition to what their posterity afterwards were, as the sand of the sea, without number.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verses 12.—14.—One would think that all the world would have been upon them; but here was the protection, God has a negative voice, "*He suffered no man to do them wrong.*" Many had (as we say) an aching tooth at the people of God, their finger itched to be dealing with them, and the text shews four advantages the world had against them. First, "*They were few.*" Secondly, "*very few.*" Thirdly, "*strangers.*" Fourthly, *unsettled.* What hindered their enemies? It was the Lord's negative voice. "*He reproved kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*" We see an instance of this (Gen. xxxv. 5). When Jacob and his family journeyed, "the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." They had a mind to pursue after them, to revenge the slaughter of the Shechemites; but God said, *Pursue not,* and then they could not pursue, they must stay at home. And when his people the Jews were safe in Canaan he encourages them to come up freely to worship at Jerusalem, by this assurance, "No man shall desire the land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year" (Exod. xxxiv.

24). God can stop not only hands from spoiling, but hearts from desiring.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 13.—"*From one kingdom to another people.*" Where we might have expected *from kingdon to kingdom*, the ear is somewhat disappointed by the phrase, "*from one kingdom to another people*," which may have been intended to distinguish the Egyptian and other monarchies from the more democratical or patriarchal institutions of the Arabians and other nations.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 13.—Though frequent flitting is neither desirable nor commendable, yet sometimes there is a just and necessary occasion for it, and it may be the lot of some of the best of men.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 14.—"*He suffered no man to do them wrong.*" As many rose up, one after another, in troops against them, the Psalmist says indefinitely, that men were withheld from hurting them; for אָדָם, *Adam*, is the word here used, which is the one most generally employed to signify *man.*—*John Calvin.*

Verses 14, 15.—I resolve the words into these three parts. 1. Here is the nearness and the dearness of the saints unto God. They are dearer to him than kings and states, simply considered; that is, otherwise than as they in their persons are also saints; for you see that for their sakes he reproved kings, and so sheweth that he preferreth them to kings.

2. Here is the great danger to kings and states, to deal with his saints otherwise than well. Which appeareth many ways; for he doth not only in words give a charge not to touch them, but he carries it in a high way (for so God will do when he pleads their cause). Touch them not; as if he had said, Let me see if you dare so much as touch them; and it is with an intimation of the highest threatening if they should; upon your peril if you do so; for that is the scope of such a speech. And accordingly in deeds he made this good; for the text saith he suffered no man to do them wrong; not that he did altogether prevent all wrong and injuries, for they received many as they went through those lands; but at no time did he let it go unpunished. In that sense he suffered them not. You know how he plagued Pharaoh, king of Egypt, with great plagues, and all his household, for Abraham's wife's sake, Gen. xii. And so Abimelech, king of Gerar, the Lord cometh upon him with a greatness, and his first word is in Gen. xx. 3, "Behold, thou art but a dead man," afore he had first told him why or wherefore, though then he adds the reason; he brings him upon his knees, verse 4, bids him look to it, that he give satisfaction to Abraham, and restore his wife to him again, verse 7; and well he escaped so; and tells him also that he must be beholden to Abraham's prayers for his life. "He is a prophet," saith he, "and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live."

3. The third is the care and protection which God had over them, set and amplified, 1, by the number and condition of the persons whom he defended; though "*few men in number*," that is, soon reckoned, for their power and strength a few, or very small, εἰς μικρούς, so the Septuagint in the parallel place, 1 Chron, xvi. 19; as also, 2, by what he did for them: He suffered no man, how great soever, to do them any wrong, how small soever; not without recompense and satisfaction; not to do it, though they had a mind to it. Though the people had an ill eye at them, Gen. xxvi. 11, God causeth Abimelech to make a law on purpose; Abimelech charged all his people in Isaac's behalf, and spake in the very words of the text, "He that toucheth this man or his wife shall be put to death."—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 15.—"*Mine anointed.*" Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had no external anointing. They were, however, called "*anointed*," because they were separated by God from the multitude of wicked men, and endowed with the Spirit and his gifts, of which the oil was an emblem.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 15.—"*Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*" We see here a vivid description of the people of God. They are "his anointed ones," "having the residue of his Spirit"; they are his prophets, to whom is intrusted the word of life, that they may be witnesses in the world. To these he gives as it were a safe passport through the world. Though they have ever been but men of number, accounted as a vile thing, they are precious in his sight. They are not distinguished by external dignity, numbers and power, as Rome sets forth the marks of her communion. They are in the midst of kingdoms, but not of them. They form usually the humblest portions of most communities, and yet they receive honour from God. Despised by the world, but unto God kings and priests, ordained and anointed to reign with Christ for ever.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 15.—"*Prophets.*" The נָבִיא is the prophet, or forth-speaker; the term laying stress on the utterance, and not upon the vision. The Hebrew word comes from a root which means to bubble up and overflow as from a full fountain. But the fulness of the true prophets of Jehovah was not that of their own thoughts and emotions. It was of the Divine Spirit within them. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Peter i. 21. The first application of the word is to Abraham (Gen. xx. 7); although, long before Abraham, "Enoch the seventh from Adam, prophesied," Jude 14.—*Donald Fraser, in "Synoptical Lectures on the Books of Holy Scripture."* 1873.

Verse 16.—"*He called for a famine.*" As a master *calls for* a servant ready to do his bidding. On the contrary, God says (Ezek. xxxvi. 29), "I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you." Compare the centurion's words as to sickness being Christ's servant, ready to come or go at his call, Matt. viii. 8, 9.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verses 17—22.—Joseph may be a fit type to us of our spiritual deliverance. Consider him sold into Egypt, not without the determinate counsel of God, who preordained this to good; "God did send me before you to preserve life," Gen. xlv. 5. Here is the difference, the brethren sold Joseph, we sold ourselves. Consider us thus sold unto sin and death; God had a purpose to redeem us; there is election. Joseph was delivered out of prison, and we ransomed out of the house of bondage; there was redemption. Joseph's cause was made known, and himself acquitted; we could not be found innocent ourselves, but were acquitted in Christ; wherein consists our justification. Lastly, Joseph was clothed in glorious apparel, and adorned with golden chains, and made to ride in the second chariot of Egypt: so our last step is to be advanced to high honour, even the glory of the celestial court; "This honour have all the saints," Psalm cxlix. 9.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verses 17—22.—In many circumstances concerning Joseph—in his being beloved of his father—in his being hated of his brethren—in his sufferings and deep abasement—in his being brought out of prison—in his advancement and exaltation—in his wisdom and prudence—in his providing for his father's family—in his free forgiveness of the injuries he had sustained from his brethren—it may be truly said, we have Christ delineated therein, and set forth thereby, in type, figure, and representatively. But I have nothing to do with this here; I only give this hint to the reader.—*Samuel Eyles Pierce,* 1817.

Verse 18.—"*His soul came into iron*" (margin). The whole person is denoted by the *soul*, because the soul of the captive suffers still more than the body. Imprisonment is one of the most severe trials to the soul. Even to spiritual heroes, such as a Savonarola and St. Cyran, the waters often go over the soul. —*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 18.—"*His soul came into iron.*" Till we have felt it, we cannot conceive that sickness of heart, which at times will steal upon the patient sufferer;

that sense of loneliness, that faintness of soul, which comes from hopes deferred and wishes unshared, from the selfishness of brethren and the heartlessness of the world. We ask ourselves, If the Lord were with me, should I suffer thus, not only the scorn of the learned and the contempt of the great, but even the indifference and neglect of those whom I have served, who yet forget me? So Joseph might have asked; and so till now may the elect ask, as they stand alone without man's encouragement or sympathy, not turned aside by falsehood or scorn, with their face set as a flint, yet deeply feeling what it costs them.—*Andrew Jukes, in "The Types of Genesis,"* 1858.

Verse 19.—"*Until the time that his word came: the word of the* LORD *tried him.*" This verse forms the key to the whole meaning of Joseph's mysterious trial, and at the same time illustrates a deep mystery in the spiritual life of man. By "*the word of the* LORD" that "*tried him,*" the psalmist evidently refers to the dreams of his future destiny which were sent to Joseph from God; and in saying that they tried him "*until his word came,*" he evidently means that his faith in those promises was tested by his long imprisonment, until the day of his deliverance dawned. Consider for a moment his position, and you will see the purpose of that trial. A youth educated amidst all the quiet simplicity of the early patriarchal life, he was haunted by dream-visions of a mighty destiny. Those visions were mysteriously foretelling his government in Egypt, and the blessings which his wise and just rule would confer on the land; but while unable to comprehend them, he yet believed that they were voices of the future, and promises of God. But the quietude of that shepherd life was not the preparation for the fulfilment of his promised destiny. The education that would form the man who could withstand, firmly, the temptations of Egyptian life with its cities and civilization; the education that would form the ruler whose clear eye should judge between the good and the evil, and discern the course of safety in the hour of a nation's peril—all this was not to be gained under the shadow of his father's tent; it must come through trial, and through trial arising from the very promise of God in which he believed. Hence, a great and startling change crossed his life, that seemed to forbid the fulfilment of that dream-promise, and tempted him to doubt its truth. Sold into Egypt as a slave, cast into prison through his fidelity to God, the word of the Lord most powerfully tried his soul. In the gloom of that imprisonment it was most hard to believe in God's faithfulness, when his affliction had risen from his obedience; and most hard to keep the promise clearly before him, when his mighty trouble would perpetually tempt him to regard it as an idle dream. But through the temptation, he gained the strong trust which the pomp and glory of the Egyptian court would have no power to destroy; and when the word of deliverance came, the man came forth, strong through trial, to fulfil his glorious destiny of ruling Egypt in the name of God, and securing for it the blessings of heaven. Thus his trial by the word of the Lord—his temptation to doubt its truth—was a divine discipline preparing him for the fulfilment of the promise.

And looking at it in this aspect, this verse presents to us a deep spiritual truth: The promises of God try man, that through the trial he may be prepared for their fulfilment. Our subject then is this: The trial of man by the promises of God. This verse suggests three great facts which exhibit the three aspects of that trial.

I. God's promises must try man. Every promise of the Lord is *of necessity* a trial. Now, this necessity arises from two sources; from man's secret unbelief, and from God's purposes of discipline.

1. *God's word must try man by revealing his secret unbelief.* We never know our want of faith till some glorious promise rouses the soul into the attitude of belief; then the coldness and unfaithfulness of the heart are lighted up by that flash of belief, and the promise is a trial. Thus Paul with his profound insight into the facts of spiritual experience, says, "The word of the Lord is sharper

than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" In illustration of this we may observe that many promises of the Lord come to us, as they came to Joseph, like dream-visions of the future. Visions come to the Christian soul, as grand and wonderful as those which came to the Hebrew youth of old; and they, too, are prophecies of what we are destined to be. There comes a time when the voice of God is more clearly heard, and the great inheritance revealed. No dream of the night—no spirit of the dead—has visited us; but like a spirit some truth of God has entered the soul's presence-chamber and summoned it to noble aspiration and Christ-like endeavour. Then the earnest of the future gleams on life's horizon. The Sabbath of eternity, with all its balm and music, seems near, and rapt with its glory, we are roused to all-surrendering zeal. But I appeal to your experience whether it is not true that such revelations of the promise rapidly become times of trial. Then the mocking voice of unbelief tells us that aspiration is vain. The cold cross-currents of indifference chill the fiery impulses of the heart. We are prisoned like Joseph, by no material bars indeed, but by the invisible bonds of unbelief; and we find it most hard to keep the promise clear and bright, while tempted to believe that our aspirations were merely idle dreams. And *there* is that arousing, by the promise, of the soul's hidden unbelief, which makes every promise an inevitable trial.

2. Again: *God causes his promises to try us, that he may accomplish his own purposes of discipline.* It is a law of our nature that no belief in any unseen thing can ever pass into the active form of strong endeavour to attain it, until we are tempted to disbelieve it. Thus the great idea of an undiscovered land across the wastes of the Atlantic smote the soul of Columbus; but it remained a dreamy faith until by opposition and ridicule he was tempted to regard it as a dream, and then it became heroic endeavour, and the land was found. Thus with all men of genius. They stand in the front of their age, with thoughts which the world cannot understand; but those thoughts are dreams until suffering and scorn try the men, and then they are awakened into effort to realise them. Hence God leads us into circumstances in which we are tempted to doubt his promises, that by temptation he may discipline faith into power. There is a wilderness of temptation in every life, and like Christ, we are often led into it, from the solemn hour when we heard the voice, "Thou art my son;" but like Christ, we come forth strong, through the long, silent wrestling with temptation, to do our Father's will.

II. God sends the Hour of Deliverance: "*until the time that his word came.*" When the discipline was *perfected*, Joseph came forth ready for his mission. But our deliverance does not always come in *this* way. Take from the Bible histories the four great methods by which God sends deliverance. *Sometimes by death.* Thus with Elijah. Weariness, loneliness, failure, had wrung from the strong man the cry, "Take away my life for I am not better than my fathers." The temptation was becoming too strong, and God sent deliverance in the chariot of fire. *Sometimes by transforming the height of trial into the height of blessing.* The three youths in Babylon had clenched their nerves for the climax of agony, when the fire became a Paradise. So, now, God makes the climax of trial the herald of spiritual blessedness. By suffering we are loosened from the bonds of time and sense; there is one near to us like the Son of God; and deliverance has come. *Sometimes by the glance of love on the falling soul.* Thus with Peter. The temptation was mastering him; one glance of *that* eye, and he went out weeping and delivered. *Sometimes by continuing the trial, but increasing the power to endure it.* Thus with Paul. After the vision of the third heaven came "the thorn in the flesh." The temptation made him cry thrice to God; the trial remained, but here was the deliverance—"my grace is sufficient for thee." The suffering lost none of its pressure, but he learned to glory in infirmity; and *then* came his delivering hour.

III. God makes the Trial by Promise fulfil the Promise itself. In Joseph the

temptation to doubt the word of God silently meetened him for its fulfilment. So with us all. We hope not for an Egyptian kingdom, our dream-vision is of a heavenly inheritance, and the palace of a heavenly King. But every temptation resisted, every mocking voice of doubt overcome, is an aid upwards and onwards. Trials, sufferings, struggles, are angels arraying the souls in the white robes of the heavenly world, and crowning it with the crown that fadeth not away. And when the end comes, then it will be seen that the long dreary endeavour to hold fast the dream-promise—the firm resolute "no" to the temptation to disbelieve, are all more than recompensed with "the exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—*Edward Luscombe, in "Sermons preached at Kings Lynn."* 1867.

Verse 19.—"*The word of the* LORD *tried him.*" As we try God's word, so God's word tries us; and happy if, when we are tried, we come forth as gold; and the trial of our faith proves more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire.—*William Jay.*

Verse 19.—"*Tried him.*" I doubt not that Joseph's brethren were humbled, yet Joseph may be more, he must be cast into the ditch, and into the prison, and the iron must enter not only into his legs, but into his soul. He must be more affected in spirit, because he was to do greater work for God, and was to be raised up higher than the rest, and therefore did need the more ballast.—*Thomas Shepard, in "The Sound Beleever,"* 1649.

Verse 19.—"*Tried.*" צָרַף, "assayed;" Ps. xii. 6; xvii. 3; xviii. 30. He came out of the ordeal, as gold from the fining-pot, more pure and lustrous. —*William Kay.*

Verses 19—21.—"*Tried him.*" "*Made him lord of his house.*" Joseph's feet were hurt in irons, to fit him to tread more delicately in the King's Palace at Zoan; and when the Lord's time was come, by the same stairs which winded him into the dungeon he climbs up into the next chariot to Pharaoh's. Few can bear great and sudden mercies without pride and wantonness, till they are hampered and humbled to carry it moderately.—*Samuel Lee, in "The Triumph of Mercy in the Chariot of Praise,"* 1677.

Verse 20.—"*The king sent and loosed him.*" And that by his own master, Potiphar, who had clapt him up there by his wanton wife's wicked instigation. He had been bound ignominiously, but now comes he to be loosed honourably. —*Christopher Ness.*

Verse 21.—"*Ruler of all his substance,*" or "*possession.*" Herein also he was a type of Jesus Christ, who, as God, is possessor of heaven and earth, being the creator of them.—*John Gill.*

Verses 21—22.—He was received into the Royal Society of the right honourable the king's privy councillors, and was constituted as Chairman of the council-table, which, though Moses doth not express, yet David intimateth in Ps. cv. 21, 22. All the privy-councillors, as well as the private people were bound (possibly by oath) to obey him in all things, and, as out of the chair, he magisterially *taught these senators wisdom.* Thus the Hebrew reading runs: *He bound the princes to his soul* (or according to his will) and *made wise his elders;* teaching them not only civil and moral, but also divine wisdom, for which cause God sent Joseph (saith he) into Egypt, that some sound of the redemption of fallen mankind might be heard in that kingdom, at that time the most flourishing in the world: neither is Moses altogether silent herein, for he calls him a *master of wisdom,* or *father to* Pharaoh (Gen. xlv. 8). Much more to his councillors, and he says that no hand or foot shall move (to wit, in affairs of state, at home, or, in foreign embassies, abroad) without Joseph's order; he was the king's plenipotentiary, Gen. xli. 44.—*Christopher Ness.*

Verse 22.—"*To bind his princes.*" The meaning of לְאַסֵּר שָׂרָיו signifies to exercise control over the greatest men in the kingdom, which power was

conferred on Joseph by Pharaoh: see Gen. xli. 40; also verses 43, 44. The capability of binding is to be regarded as an evidence of authority: a power of compelling obedience; or, in default thereof, of inflicting punishment.—*George Phillips.* 1846.

Verse 22.—"*At his pleasure.*" Literally, *with his soul*, which some explain as a bold metaphor, describing Joseph's mind or soul as the cord or chain with which he bound the Egyptians, *i.e.*, forced them to perform his will. But see Ps. xvii. 9; xxvii. 12; xli. 2.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 22.—"*And teach his senators wisdom.*" That in that wisdom wherein he had been instructed of God he might also instruct the princes, and teach prudence to those who were much his seniors. Herein some sparks of divine wisdom shine, that he should order even the princes and old men to learn wisdom from one who was a slave and a foreigner, although the Egyptians are always wont to boast that Egypt is the native place of wisdom.—*Jansenius.*

Verse 23.—"*Egypt*" . . . "*the land of Ham.*" The Egyptians were a branch of the race of Ham. They came from Asia through the desert of Syria to settle in the valley of the Nile. This is a fact clearly established by science, and entirely confirms the statements of the book of Genesis.—*F. Lenormant and E. Chevalier, in* "*A Manual of Ancient History,*" 1869.

Verse 24.—"*He increased his people greatly.*" Behold here the concealed blessing in the secret of the cross. Under it the people of God are in the most fruitful state.—*Berleb. Bible.*

Verse 25.—"*He turned their heart to hate his people.*" Not by putting this wicked hatred into them, which is not consistent either with the holiness of God's nature, or with the truth of his word, and which was altogether unnecessary, because they had that and all other wickedness in them by nature; but partly by withdrawing the common gifts and operations of his Spirit, and all the restraints and hindrances to it, and wholly leaving them to their own mistakes, and passions, and corrupt affections, which of their own accord were ready to take that course; and partly, by directing and governing that hatred, which was wholly in and from themselves, so as it should fall upon the Israelites rather than upon other people.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verses 25, 26.—When by the malice of enemies God's people are brought to greatest straits, there is deliverance near to be sent from God unto them. "*They dealt subtilly with his servants. He sent Moses his servant.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 26.—"*Moses and Aaron.*" God usually sendeth his servants by two and two for mutual helps and comfort.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 28.—"*He sent darkness.*" The darkness here stands at the beginning, (not in the historical order that the particular plague of darkness stood), to mark how *God's wrath* hung over Egypt as a *dark cloud* during all the plagues.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 28.—"*Darkness.*" There is an awful significance in this plague of darkness. The sun was a leading object of devotion among the Egyptians under the name of Osiris. The very name Pharaoh means not only the king but also the sun, and characterises the king himself as the representative of the sun and entitled in some sort to divine honours. But now the very light of the sun has disappeared and primeval chaos seems to have returned. Thus all the forms of Egyptian will-worship were covered with shame and confusion by the plagues.—*James G. Murphy, in* "*A Commentary on Exodus,*" 1866.

Verse 28.—"*Made it dark.*" God is often described as manifesting his displeasure in a cloud. Joel speaks of the day of God's vengeance as "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness" (Joel ii. 2); and Zephaniah employs nearly the same language (i. 15). The pillar that went before the Israelites, and gave them light, was to the Egyptians "a cloud and

darkness" (Exod. xiv. 20). The darkness which was upon the face of the earth "in the beginning," is described by Jehovah in the book of Job as a cloud: "When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it" Job xxxviii. 9. So now the land of Egypt may have been wrapped about by a thick palpable cloud, cold, damp, impenetrable: the people would feel it upon their limbs, as swaddling-bands; the sun would be blotted out by it, and all things reduced almost to a state of death—of which this ninth plague was in a certain sense the shadow cast before. Such a cloud would be even more terrible in Egypt, sunny Egypt, than in other countries; for there the sky is almost always clear, and heavy rains unknown. But in any place, and under any conditions, it must have been full of horror and misery. Nothing could represent this more forcibly than the short sentence, "Neither rose any from his place for three days." It was an horror of great darkness; it rested on them like a pall; they knew not what dangers might be around them, what judgment was next to happen: they had not been forewarned of this plague, and they could not tell but it might be only a prelude to some more awful visitation: their soul melted in them, for fear of those things that might come upon them: they dared not move from chamber to chamber, nor even from seat to seat: wherever they chanced to be at the moment when the darkness fell upon them, there they must remain. Pharaoh might call in vain for his guards; they could not come to him. Moses and Aaron were no longer within reach, for none could go to seek them. Masters could not command their slaves, nor slaves hasten to obey their master's call; the wife could not flee to her husband, nor the child cling to its parents: the same fear was upon all, both high and low; the same paralysing terror and dismay possessed them every one. As says the patriarch Job, they "laid hold on horror" (Job xviii. 20). And this continued for three days and nights: they had no lamps nor torches; either they could not kindle them, or they dared not move to procure them: they were silent in darkness, like men already dead. Hope and expectation of returning light might at first support them; but hope delayed through seventy-two weary hours would presently die out, and leave them to despair. The darkness would become more oppressive and intolerable the longer it continued; "felt" upon their bodies as a physical infliction, and "felt" even more in their souls in agonies of fear and apprehension; such a darkness as that which, in the book of Revelation, the fifth angel pours out upon the seat of the beast—"Whose kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (Rev. xvi. 10, 11). If there be any truth in the traditions of the Jews on this subject, there were yet greater alarms under this canopy of darkness, this palpable obscurity, than any which would arise out of the physical infliction. Darkness is a type of Satan's kingdom; and Satan had some liberty in Egypt to walk up and down upon the land, and to go to and fro in it. The Jewish Rabbis tell us that the devil and his angels were let loose during these three dreadful days; that they had a wider range and greater liberty than usual for working mischief. They describe these evil spirits going among the wretched people, glued to their seats as they were, with terror; frightening them with fearful apparitions; piercing their ears with hideous shrieks and groans; driving them almost to madness with the intensity of their fears; making their flesh creep, and the hair of their head to stand on end. Such a climax seems to be referred to by the Psalmist, "He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them" (Ps. lxxviii. 49).—*Thomas S. Millington, in "Signs and Wonders in the Land of Ham,"* 1873.

Verse 28.—"*And they rebelled not against his word.*" The plague of darkness and the rest of the plagues which God commanded; these as they were his servants, were not disobedient to him, they came at his word. See verses 31, 34.—*John Gill.*

Verse 28.—"*They rebelled not against his word*"; as Jonah did, who, when he

was sent to denounce God's judgments against Nineveh, went to Tarshish. Moses and Aaron were not moved, either with a foolish fear of Pharaoh's wrath, or a foolish pity of Egypt's misery, to relax or retard any of the plagues which God ordered them to inflict on the Egyptians; but stretched forth their hand to inflict them as God appointed. They that are instructed to execute judgment, will find their remissness construed a rebellion against God's word.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 29.—"*He turned their waters into blood,*" etc. The Nile begins to rise about the end of June, and attains its highest point at the end of September. About the commencement of the rise it assumes a greenish hue, is disagreeable to the taste, unwholesome, and often totally unfit for drinking. It soon, however, becomes red and turbid, and continues in this state for three or more weeks. In this condition it is again healthy and fit for use. The miracle now performed was totally different from this annual change. For, 1, it occurred after the winter, not the summer, solstice; 2. the water was turned into blood, and not merely reddened by an admixture of red clay or animalcula; 3, the fish died, a result which did not follow from the periodical change of colour; 4, the river stank, and became offensive, which it ceased to be when the ordinary redness made its appearance; 5, the stroke was arrested at the end of seven days, whereas the natural redness continued for at least three weeks; and 6, the change was brought on instantly at the word of command before the eyes of Pharaoh. The calamity was appalling. The sweet waters of the Nile were the common beverage of Egypt. It abounded in all kinds of fish, which formed a principal article of diet for the inhabitants. It was revered as a god by Egypt. But now it was a putrid flood, from which they turned away with loathing.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 29.—"*He turned their waters into blood.*" By the miraculous change of the waters into blood, a practical rebuke was given to their superstitious. This sacred and beautiful river, the benefactor and preserver of the country, this birthplace of their chief gods, this abode of their lesser deities, this source of all their prosperity, this centre of all their devotion, is turned to blood: the waters stink; the canals and pools, the vessels of wood and vessels of stone, which were replenished from the river, all are alike polluted. The Nile, according to Pliny, was the "only source from whence the Egyptians obtained water for drinking" (Hist. Nat. 76, c. 33). This water was considered particularly sweet and refreshing; so much so that the people were in the habit of provoking thirst in order that they might partake more freely of its soft and pleasant draughts. Now it was become abominable to them, and they loathed to drink of it.—*Thomas S. Millington.*

Verse 29.—"*And slew their fish.*" Besides the fish cured, or sent to market for the table, a very great quantity was set apart expressly for feeding the sacred animals and birds,—as the cats, crocodiles, ibises, and others; and some of the large reservoirs, attached to the temples, were used as well for keeping fish as for the necessary ablutions of the devout, and for various purposes connected with religion. The quantity of fish in Egypt was a very great boon to the poor classes, and when the Nile overflowed the country inhabitants of the inland villages benefited by this annual gift of the river, as the land did by the fertilizing mud deposited upon it. The canals, ponds, and pools, on the low lands, continued to abound in fish, even after the inundation had ceased; and it was then that their return to the Nile was intercepted by closing the mouths of the canals.—*Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, in "A Popular Account of the Ancient Egyptians,"* 1854.

Verse 30.—"*Their land brought forth frogs in abundance.*" This is the natural appearance next in the order of occurrence to the Red Nile, and of it also the God of nature availed himself to vindicate his power before Pharaoh, and before Egypt. The Nile, its branches, and the great canals of irrigation

are all bank-full, and the exuberant moisture has aroused from their summer torpor, into life and activity, the frogs of the Nile, in numbers inconceivable to those who have not been in hot countries. Even in ordinary years the annoyance of these loathsome creatures night and day, gives some idea of what this plague must have been, and renders abundantly reasonable the creation of a goddess, *Ranipuda*,* at the very commencement of the mythology of ancient Egypt. In the whole of this fearful succession of judgments there is not one more personally revolting than the plague of frogs.—*William Osborne.*

Verse 30.—"*Their land brought forth frogs in abundance.*" It is not difficult for an Englishman, in an Eastern wet monsoon, to form a tolerable idea of that plague of Egypt, in which the frogs were in the "houses, bed-chambers, beds and kneading-troughs," of the Egyptians. In the rainy season, myriads of them send forth their constant croak in every direction; and a man not possessed of over-much patience, becomes as petulant as was the licentious god, and is ready to exclaim,

> "*Croak, croak!* Indeed I shall choke,
> If you pester and bore my ears any more
> With your *croak, croak, croak!*"

A new-comer, on seeing them leap about the rooms, becomes disgusted, and forthwith begins an attack upon them; but the next evening will bring a return of his active visitors. It may appear almost incredible, but in one evening we killed upwards of forty of these guests in the Jaffna Mission-house. They had principally concealed themselves in a small tunnel connected with the bathing room, where their noise had become almost insupportable.—*Joseph Roberts, in "Oriental Illustrations,"* 1844.

Verse 30.—"*Chambers of their kings.*" God plagued Pharaoh in his *bed-chamber:* it may be because he would show that his judgments can penetrate the greatest privacy; for the field, and the hall, and the *bed-chamber*, and the closet are all one to God.

It is like enough that it would not move Pharaoh much that his borders were filled with frogs; but they must come into his *house, and into his bed-chamber.* My observation is—the greatest princes in the world if they offend God are not exempted from judgments. Princes and great persons, are usually exempted from the reproof of men. As for the laws, ofttimes they are as cob-webs, the great flies break through them. Who dare say to a prince, "Thou art wicked"? Nay, one saith concerning the Pope, it is not lawful to say, "What doth he so?" Now when they are not within the compass of human reproof, God strikes them.—*Josias Shute, in "Judgment and Mercy: or, the Plague of Frogs,"* 1645.

Verse 31.—"*Flies.*" This term serves to denote a kind of insect that alights on the skin or leaves of plants, by its bite inflicting pain in the one case, and causing destruction in the other. The swarms of flies in Egypt are usually numerous, and excessively annoying. They alight on the moist part of the eyelids and nostrils, and inflict wounds that produce great pain, swelling and inflammation. They are also ruinous to the plants in which they lay their eggs. Philo (vit. Mos. ii. p. 110) describes the dog-fly or gad-fly as a grievous pest of Egypt. Gnats and mosquitoes are also abundant and virulent. A plague of such creatures would cause immense suffering and desolation.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 31.—As an illustration of the power of flies we give an extract from Charles Marshall's "Canadian Dominion." "I have been told by men of unquestioned veracity, that at mid-day the clouds of mosquitoes on the plains would sometimes hide the leaders in a team of four horses from the sight of the driver. Cattle could only be recognised by their shape; all alike becoming

* "Driver away of frogs." Her name was Heki; *Birch* ap. Bunsen. She was the *Buto* of the Greek authors.

black with an impenetrable crust of mosquitoes. The line of the route over the Red River plains would be marked by the carcases of oxen stung to death by this insignificant foe."

Verse 31.—"*Lice in all their coasts.*" The priests, being polluted by this horrible infection, could not stand to minister before their deities. The people could not, in their uncleanness, be admitted within the precincts of their temples. If they would offer sacrifice, there were no victims fit for the purpose. Even the gods, the oxen, and goats, and cats, were defiled with the vermin. The Egyptians not only writhed under the loathsome scourge, but felt themselves humbled and disgraced by it. Josephus notices this:—"Pharaoh," he says, "was so confounded at this new plague, that, what with the danger, the *scandal*, and the nastiness of it, he was half sorry for what he had done" (b. ii. c. 14). The plague assumed the form of a disease, being "in the people." Exod. viii. 17. As Josephus says again, "The bodies of the people bred them, and they were all covered over with them, gnawing and tearing intolerably, and no remedy, for baths and ointments did no good." But, however distressing to their bodies, the foul and disgraceful character of the plague, and the offence brought upon their religion by the defilement of their deities and the interruption of all their religious ceremonies, was its most offensive feature.—*Thomas S. Millington.*

Verse 31.—"*Lice.*" Vermin of the kind is one of the common annoyances of Egypt. Herodotus tells us (ii. 37) that the priests shave their whole body every other day, that no lice or other impure thing may adhere to them when they are engaged in the service of the gods. It is manifest that this species of vermin was particularly disgusting to the Egyptians.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 32.—"*He gave them hail for rain.*" I had ridden out to the excavations [at Gizeh], when seeing a large black cloud approaching, I sent a servant to the tents to take care of them, but as it began to rain slightly I soon rode after him myself. Shortly after my arrival a storm of wind began; I therefore ordered the cords of the tents to be secured, but soon a violent shower of rain came in addition, which alarmed all our Arabs, and drove them into the rock-tomb, in which is our kitchen. . . . Suddenly the storm became a regular hurricane, such as I had never witnessed in Europe, and a hailstorm came down on us, which almost turned the day into night. . . It was not long before first our common tent fell down, and when I had hastened from that into my own, in order to hold it from the inside, this also broke down above me.—*Carl Richard Lepsius, in "Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Peninsula of Sinai."* 1853.

Verse 32.—"*Hail.*" Extraordinary reports of the magnitude of hailstones, which have fallen during storms so memorable as to find a place in general history, have come down from periods of antiquity more or less remote. According to the "Chronicles," a hailstorm occurred in the reign of Charlemagne, in which hailstones fell which measured fifteen feet in length by six feet in breadth, and eleven feet in thickness; and under the reign of Tippoo Saib, hailstones equal in magnitude to elephants are said to have fallen. Setting aside these and like recitals as partaking rather of the character of fable than of history, we shall find sufficient to create astonishment in well authenticated observations on this subject.

In a hailstorm which took place in Flintshire on the 9th of April, 1672, Halley saw hailstones which weighed five ounces.

On the 4th of May, 1697, Robert Taylor saw fall hailstones measuring fourteen inches in circumference.

In the storm which ravaged Como on 20th August, 1787, Volta saw hailstones which weighed nine ounces.

On 22nd May, 1822, Dr. Noggerath saw fall at Bonn hailstones which weighed from twelve to thirteen ounces.

It appears, therefore, certain that in different countries hailstorms have

occurred in which stones weighing from half to three-quarters of a pound have fallen.—*Dionysius Lardner, in "The Museum of Science and Art,"* 1854.

Verse 34.—"*Locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number.*" In this country, and in all the dominions of Prete Janni, is a very great and horrible plague, which is an innumerable company of locusts, which eat and consume all the corn and trees; and the number of them is so great, as it is incredible; and with their multitude they cover the earth, and fill the air in such wise, that it is a hard matter to be able to see the sun. . . . We travelled five days' journey through places wholly waste and destroyed, wherein millet had been sown, which had stalks as great as those we set in our vineyards, and we saw them all broken and beaten down as if a tempest had been there; and this the locusts did. The trees were without leaves, and the bark of them was all devoured; and no grass was there to be seen, for they had eaten up all things; and if we had not been warned and advised to carry victual with us, we and our cattle had perished. This country was all covered with locusts without wings; and they told us these were the seed of them which had eaten up all, and that as soon as their wings were grown they would seek after the old ones. The number of them was so great, that I shall not speak of it, because I shall not be believed: but this I will say, that I saw men, women, and children sit as forlorn and dead among the locusts.—*Samuel Purchas,* 1577—1628.

Verse 34.—"*Locusts and caterpillars.*" God did not bring the same plague twice; but when there was occasion for another, it was still a new one; for he has many arrows in his quiver.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 34.—"*Without number.*" A swarm [of locusts], which was observed in India in 1825, occupied a space of forty English square miles, contained at least forty millions of locusts in one line, and cast a long shadow on the earth. And Major Moore thus describes an immense army of these animals which ravaged the Mahratta country: "The column they composed extended five hundred miles; and so compact was it when on the wing, that like an eclipse, it completely hid the sun, so that no shadow was cast by any object." Brown, in his travels in Africa, states that an area of nearly two thousand square miles was literally covered by them; and Kirby and Spence mention that a column of them was so immense, that they took four hours to fly over the spot where the observer stood.—*M. Kalisch.*

Verse 34.—"*Came . . . and that without number.*"

> Onward they came, a dark continuous cloud
> Of congregated myriads numberless;
> The rushing of whose wings was as the sound
> Of some broad river, headlong in its course,
> Plunged from a mountain summit; or the roar
> Of a wild ocean in the autumnal storm,
> Shattering its billows on a shore of rocks,
> Onward they came, the winds impelled them on.
>
> *Robert Southey,* 1774—1843.

Verse 35.—"*Did eat up all the herbs.*" The locusts had devoured every green herb and every blade of grass; and had it not been for the reeds, on which our cattle entirely subsisted while we skirted the banks of the river, the journey must have been discontinued, at least in the line that had been proposed. The larvæ, as generally is the case in this class of nature, are much more voracious than the perfect insect; nothing that is green seems to come amiss to them. . . . The traces of their route over the country are very obvious for many weeks after they have passed it, the surface appearing as if swept by a broom, or as if a harrow had been drawn over it.—*John Barrow,* 1764—1849.

Verse 36.—"*He smote also all the firstborn.*" Did you hear that cry? 'Tis

the moment of midnight, and some tragedy is enacted in that Egyptian dwelling, for such an unearthly shriek! and it is repeated and re-echoed, as doors burst open and frantic women rush into the street, and, as the houses of priests and physicians are beset, they only shake their heads in speechless agony, and point to the death-sealed features of their own first-born. Lights are flashing at the palace gates, and flitting through the royal chambers; and as king's messengers hasten through the town enquiring where the two venerable Hebrew brothers dwell, the whisper flies, "The prince-royal is dead!" Be off, ye sons of Jacob! speed from your house of bondage, ye oppressed and injured Israelites! And in their eagerness to "thrust forth" the terrible because Heaven-protected race, they press upon them gold and jewels, and bribe them to be gone.—*James Hamilton.*

Verse 37.—"*There was not one feeble person among their tribes,*" when Israel came out of Egypt; there was while dwelling there: so there shall be no *feeble saint* go to heaven, but they shall be perfect when carried hence by the angels of God, though they complain of feebleness here. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old;" Isa. lxv. 20. As there is in all *dying* or departed persons a great *shooting* in their stature observed; so is there in the *soul* much more. The least infant shoots in the *instant of dissolution* to such a perfect knowledge of God, and such a measure of grace as is not attainable here, that he is "as David;" and the tallest Christian comes to such a height, that he is "as an angel of God," Zech. xii. 8.—*John Sheffield, in "The Rising Sun,"* 1654.

Verse 37.—"*There was not one feeble person among their tribes.*" They came out all in good health, and brought not with them any of the diseases of Egypt. Surely never was the like; that among so many thousands there was not one sick! so false was the representation which the Jews' enemies in after ages gave of the matter, that they were all sick of a leprosy, or some loathsome disease, and therefore the Egyptians thrust them out of their land.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 37.—"*Feeble person.*" A *totterer* or *stumbler.* The word denotes a person unfit for military service.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 39.—In the army of Alexander the Great, the march was begun by a great beacon being set upon a pole as a signal from head-quarters, so that "the fire was seen at night, the smoke in the day-time;" and the plan is still found in use amongst the caravans of Arabia. It is probable enough, in that unchanging land, that such may have been the custom at the time of the Exodus, and that God taught the people by parable in this wise, as well as by fact, that he was their true leader, and heaven the general pavilion, whence the order of march was enjoined.—*Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 39.—

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out of the land of bondage came,
Her father's God before her moved,
An awful guide in smoke and flame.

By day, along the astonished lands,
The cloudy pillar glided slow;
By night, Arabia's crimson sands
Returned the fiery column's glow.

There rose the choral hymn of praise,
And trump and timbrel answered keen,
And Zion's daughters poured their lays,
With priest's and warrior's voice between.

But present still, though now unseen,
When brightly shines the prosperous day,
Be thoughts of Thee a cloudy screen,
To temper the deceitful ray!

And oh, when stoops on Judah's path,
In shade and storm, the frequent night,
Be Thou—long-suffering, slow to wrath—
A burning and a shining light.
—*Sir Walter Scott*, 1771—1832.

Verse 40.—"*Quails.*" The quail is met with abundantly in Syria and Judæa, and there seems to be little doubt of its identity with the quails so frequently mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. "We have," says Tristram, "a clear proof of the identity of the common quail with the Hebrew *selac*, in its Arabic name, *salwa*, from a root signifying 'to be fat'—very descriptive of the round, plump form and fat flesh of the quail. . . . It migrates in vast flocks, and regularly crosses the Arabian desert, flying for the most part at night, and when the birds settle they are so utterly exhausted that they may be captured in any numbers by the hand. Notwithstanding their migratory habits, they instinctively select the shortest sea passages, and avail themselves of any island as a halting-place. Thus in Spring and Autumn they are slaughtered in numbers on Malta and many of the Greek islands, very few being seen till the period of migration comes round. They also fly with the wind, never facing it like many other birds." "The Israelites 'spread them out' when they had taken them before they were sufficiently refreshed to escape; exactly as Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians were in the habit of doing with quails—drying them in the sun." Brehm mentions having been a witness to the arrival of a huge flock of quails upon the coast of North Africa, and tells us that the weary birds fell at once to the ground completely exhausted by their toilsome journey, and remained therefore some minutes as though stupefied.—*Cassell's "Book of Birds."*

Verses 40—42.—

Brought from his store, at sute of Israell,
Quailes, in whole beavies each remove pursue;
Himself from skies their hunger to repell,
Candies the grasse with swete congealed dew.
He woundes the rock, the rock doth wounded, swell;
Swelling affoordes new streames to channells new,
All for God's mindfull will can not be dryven,
From sacred word once to his Abraham given.
—*Sir Philip Sidney*, 1554—1586.

Verse 44.—"*They inherited the labour of the people.*" In like manner the heavenly Canaan is enjoyed by the saints without any labour of theirs; this inheritance is not of the law, nor of the works of it; it is the gift of God. Rom. iv. 14 and vi. 23.—*John Gill.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—I. Praise God for former mercies. II. Pray for further mercies. III. Publish his famous mercies.

Verses 1—5.—A series of holy exercises. "Give thanks"—"call upon his name"—"make known"—"sing"—"talk"—"glory"—"rejoice"—"seek"—"remember."

Verse 2.—I. The pleasure of talking *to* God.—"Sing," etc.; making melody in the heart. II. The duty of talking *of* God.—"Talk ye," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—The Christian's table-talk.

Verse 3.—I. Those who find: or—"glory ye," etc. II. Those who seek: or—"rejoice."

Verse 3 (*second clause*).—Let the seeker rejoice that there is such a God to seek, that he invites us to seek, that he moves us to seek, enables us to seek, and promises to be found of us. The tendency of the seeker is to despond, but there are many grounds of comfort.

Verse 4.—How can we seek the Lord's strength? 1. By desiring to be subject to it. 2. By being supported by it. 3. By being equipped with it for service. 4. By seeing its results upon others.

Verse 4.—Threefold seeking. I. The Lord for mercy. II. His strength for service. III. His face for happiness.—*A. G. Brown.*

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—Seeking the Lord the perpetual occupation of a believer.

Verse 5.—Themes for memory. I. What God has done. II. What he has said.

Verses 5 and 8.—Our memory and God's memory. "Remember." "He hath remembered."

Verse 7.—God's relation to his elect and to all mankind.

Verses 9, 10.—The making, swearing, and confirming of the covenant. See our comment on these verses with the passages referred to.

Verse 12.—Comfort to the few. The typical and spiritual Israel few at first. A few in the ark peopled the world. Small companies have done wonders. Christ's presence is promised to two or three. God saveth not by many or by few, etc.

Verses 13, 14.—I. God's people may be often removed. II. They can never be injured. III. God's property in them will not be renounced.

Verses 14, 15.—*Dr. T. Goodwin* has an excellent sermon on these verses, entitled "*The Interest of England*," in which he condenses the history of the world, to show, that those nations which have persecuted and afflicted the people of God have invariably been broken in pieces.—(*Goodwin's Works*, vol. xii. pp. 34—60, Nichol's edition).

Verse 15.—In what respect Abraham was a prophet, and how far believers are the same.

Verse 16.—I. All things come at the call of God. He called for plenty, and it came, for famine, and it came; for captivity, and it came; for deliverance, and it came. II. The most unlikely means of accomplishing an end with man is often the direct way with God. He fulfilled the promise of Canaan to Abraham by banishing him from it; of plenty, by sending a famine; of freedom, by bringing into captivity.—*G. R.*

Verse 19.—The duration of our troubles, the testing power of the promise, the comfortable issue which is secured to us.

Verse 24.—Church prosperity *desirable*. Increase of numbers, increase of vigour. *Attainable* under great persecution and opposition. *Divine in its origin*—"*he* increased." *Satisfactory as a test*—it is only true of "his people."

Verse 24 (*second clause*).—In what respects grace can make believers stronger than their enemies.

Verse 25.—I. The natural hatred of the world to the church. II. God's permitting it to be shown. When? Why? III. The subtle manner in which this enmity seeks its object.

Verse 32.—"*He gave them hail for rain.*" Judgment substituted for mercy.

Verse 37.—(*first clause*).—Wealth found upon us after affliction.

Verse 37 (*second clause*).—A consummation to be desired. This was the direct result of the divine presence. The circumstances out of which it grew were hard labour, and persecution. It enabled them to leave Egypt, to journey far, to carry burdens, to fight enemies, etc.

Verse 39.—I. A dark cloud of providences is the guide of the people of God by day. II. A bright cloud of promises is their guide by night.—*G. R.*

Verse 39.—The Lord's goodness exemplified in our varying conditions. I. For prosperity—a cloud. II. For adversity—a light. A good text would be found in "light in the night."

Verse 40.—I. God often gives in love what is not asked. So the bread from heaven which was beyond all they could ask or think. II. He sometimes gives in anger what is asked. They asked for flesh to eat—"and he brought quails."—*G. R.*

Verse 41.—We have, I. A type of the person of Christ, in the rock. 1. Unsightly as Horeb—"When we shall see him, there is no beauty," etc. (Isai. liii. 2). 2. Firm and immovable—"Who is a rock, save our God?" (2 Sam. xxii. 32). II. A type of the sufferings of Christ, in the smitten rock. 1. Smitten by the rod of the Law. 2. Smitten to the heart. III. A type of the benefits of Christ, in the water flowing from the rock—pure, refreshing, perpetual, abundant.—*James Bennett*, 1828.

Verse 41.—I. The miraculous energy of God's grace in the conversion of a sinner: "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out." II. The effect in relation to others, which demonstrates at once the excellence and the reality of the miracle in ourselves: "They ran in the dry places like a river."—*Thomas Dale*, 1836.

Verse 41.—I. The grand source—the rock opened. II. The liberal stream—"gushed out." III. The continued flow—"in dry places."

Verse 42.—I. The Lord mindful of *his* promise. II. The Lord mindful of *our* persons. III. The Lord working wonders as the result of both.

Verse 45.—Obedience to God the design of his mercies to us.

PSALM CVI.

GENERAL REMARKS.—*This Psalm begins and ends with Hallelujah—"Praise ye the Lord." The space between these two descriptions of praise is filled up with the mournful details of Israel's sin, and the extraordinary patience of God; and truly we do well to bless the Lord both at the beginning and the end of our meditations when sin and grace are the themes. This sacred song is occupied with the historical part of the Old Testament, and is one of many which are thus composed: surely this should be a sufficient rebuke to those who speak slightingly of the historical Scriptures; it ill becomes a child of God to think lightly of that which the Holy Spirit so frequently uses for our instruction. What other Scriptures had David beside those very histories which are so depreciated, and yet he esteemed them beyond his necessary food, and made them his songs in the house of his pilgrimage?*

Israel's history is here written with the view of showing human sin, even as the preceding psalm was composed to magnify divine goodness. It is, in fact, A NATIONAL CONFESSION, *and includes an acknowledgment of the transgressions of Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan, with devout petitions for forgiveness such as rendered the Psalm suitable for use in all succeeding generations, and especially in times of national captivity. It was probably written by David,—at any rate its first and last two verses are to be found in that sacred song which David delivered to Asaph when he brought up the ark of the Lord* (1 *Chron. xvi.* 34, 35, 36).

While we are studying this holy Psalm, let us all along see ourselves in the Lord's ancient people, and bemoan our own provocations of the Most High, at the same time admiring his infinite patience, and adoring him because of it. May the Holy Spirit sanctify it to the promotion of humility and gratitude.

DIVISION.—*Praise and prayer are blended in the introduction (verses* 1—5). *Then comes the story of the nation's sins, which continues till the closing prayer and praise of the last two verses. While making confession the Psalmist acknowledges the sins committed in Egypt and at the Red Sea (verses* 6—12), *the lusting in the wilderness* (13—15), *the envying of Moses and Aaron* (16–18), *the worship of the golden calf* (19—23,) *the despising of the promised land* (24—27), *the iniquity of Baal Peor* (28–30), *and the waters of Meribah* (28—33). *Then he owns the failure of Israel when settled in Canaan, and mentions their consequent chastisements* (34—44), *together with the quick compassion which came to their relief when they were brought low* (44—46). *The closing prayer and doxology fill up the remaining verses.*

EXPOSITION.

PRAISE ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? *who* can shew forth all his praise?

3 Blessed *are* they that keep judgment, *and* he that doeth righteousness at all times.

4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest unto* thy people; O visit me with thy salvation;

5 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

1. "*Praise ye the* LORD." Hallelujah. Praise ye Jah. This song is for the assembled people, and they are all exhorted to join in praise to Jehovah. It is not meet for a few to praise and the rest to be silent; but all should join.

If David were present in churches where quartettes and choirs carry on all the singing, he would turn to the congregation and say, "Praise ye the Lord." Our meditation dwells upon human sin; but on all occasions and in all occupations it is seasonable and profitable to praise the Lord. "*O give thanks unto the* LORD; *for he is good.*" To us needy creatures the goodness of God is the first attribute which excites praise, and that praise takes the form of gratitude. We praise the Lord truly when we give him thanks for what we have received from his goodness. Let us never be slow to return unto the Lord our praise; to thank him is the least we can do—let us not neglect it. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Goodness towards sinners assumes the form of mercy, mercy should therefore be a leading note in our song. Since man ceases not to be sinful, it is a great blessing that Jehovah ceases not to be merciful. From age to age the Lord deals graciously with his church, and to every individual in it he is constant and faithful in his grace, even for evermore. In a short space we have here two arguments for praise, "for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever;" and these two arguments are themselves praises. The very best language of adoration is that which adoringly in the plainest words sets forth the simple truth with regard to our great Lord. No rhetorical flourishes or poetical hyperboles are needed, the bare facts are sublime poetry, and the narration of them with reverence is the essence of adoration. This first verse is the text of all that which follows; we are now to see how from generation to generation the mercy of God endured to his chosen people.

2. "*Who can utter the mighty acts of the* LORD?" What tongue of men or angels can duly describe the great displays of divine power? They are unutterable. Even those who saw them could not fully tell them. "*Who can show forth all his praise?*" To declare his works is the same thing as to praise him, for his own doings are his best commendation. We cannot say one-tenth so much for him as his own character and acts have already done? Those who praise the Lord have an infinite subject, a subject which will not be exhausted throughout eternity by the most enlarged intellects, nay, nor by the whole multitude of the redeemed, though no man can number them. The questions of this verse never can be answered; their challenge can never be accepted, except in that humble measure which can be reached by a holy life and a grateful heart.

3. Since the Lord is so good and so worthy to be praised, it must be for our happiness to obey him. "*Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.*" Multiplied are the blessednesses which must descend upon the whole company of the keepers of the way of justice, and especially upon that one rare man who at all times follows that which is right. Holiness is happiness. The way of right is the way of peace. Yet men leave this road, and prefer the paths of the destroyer. Hence the story which follows is in sad contrast with the happiness here depicted, because the way of Israel was not that of judgment and righteousness, but that of folly and iniquity. The Psalmist, while contemplating the perfections of God, was impressed with the feeling that the servants of such a being must be happy, and when he looked around and saw how the tribes of old prospered when they obeyed, and suffered when they sinned, he was still more fully assured of the truth of his conclusion. O could we but be free of sin we should be rid of sorrow! We would not only be just, but "keep judgment"; we would not be content with occasionally acting rightly, but would "do justice at all times."

4. "*Remember me, O* LORD, *with the favour which thou bearest unto thy people.*" Insignificant as I am, do not forget me. Think of me with kindness, even as thou thinkest of thine own elect. I cannot ask more, nor would I seek less. Treat me as the least of thy saints are treated and I am content. It should be enough for us if we fare as the rest of the family. If even Balaam desired no more than to die the death of the righteous, we may be well content both to live as they live, and die as they die. This feeling would prevent our

wishing to escape trial, persecution, and chastisement; these have fallen to the lot of saints, and why should we escape them?

> "Must I be carried to the skies
> On flowery beds of ease?
> While others fought to win the prize,
> And sailed through bloody seas."

At the same time we pray to have their sweets as well as their bitters. If the Lord smiled upon their souls we cannot rest unless he smiles upon us also. We would dwell where they dwell, rejoice as they rejoice, sorrow as they sorrow, and in all things be for ever one with them in the favour of the Lord. The sentence before us is a sweet prayer, at once humble and aspiring, submissive and expansive; it might be used by a dying thief or a living apostle; let us use it now.

"*O visit me with thy salvation.*" Bring it home to me. Come to my house and to my heart, and give me the salvation which thou hast prepared, and art alone able to bestow. We sometimes hear of a man's dying by the visitation of God, but here is one who knows that he can only *live* by the visitation of God. Jesus said of Zaccheus, "This day is salvation come to this house," and that was the case because he himself had come there. There is no salvation apart from the Lord, and he must visit us with it or we shall never obtain it. We are too sick to visit our Great Physician, and therefore he visits us. O that our great Bishop would hold a visitation of all the churches, and bestow his benediction upon all his flock. Sometimes the second prayer of this verse seems to be too great for us, for we feel that we are not worthy that the Lord should come under our roof. Visit me, Lord? Can it be? Dare I ask for it? And yet I must, for thou alone canst bring me salvation: therefore, Lord, I entreat thee come unto me, and abide with me for ever.

5. "*That I may see the good of thy chosen.*" His desire for the divine favour was excited by the hope that he might participate in all the good things which flow to the people of God through their election. The Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, according as he has chosen us in him, and in these precious gifts we desire to share through the saving visitation of the Lord. No other good do we wish to see, perceive, and apprehend, but that which is the peculiar treasure of the saints. "*That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation.*" The psalmist, having sought his portion in the good of the chosen, now also begs to be a partaker in their joy: for of all the nations under heaven the Lord's true people are the happiest. "*That I may glory with thine inheritance.*" He would have a part and lot in their honour as well as their joy. He was willing to find glory where saints find it, namely, in being reproached for truth's sake. To serve the Lord and endure shame for his sake is the glory of the saints below; Lord, let me rejoice to bear my part therein. To be with God above, for ever blessed in Christ Jesus, is the glory of saints above: O Lord, be pleased to allot me a place there also.

These introductory thanksgivings and supplications, though they occur first in the psalm, are doubtless the result of the contemplations which succeed them, and may be viewed not only as the preface, but also as the moral of the whole sacred song.

6 We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.

7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.

8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.

10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

11 And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.

12 Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.

6. "*We have sinned with our fathers.*" Here begins a long and particular confession. Confession of sin is the readiest way to secure an answer to the prayer of verse 4: God visits with his salvation the soul which acknowledges its need of a Saviour. Men may be said to have sinned with their fathers when they imitate them, when they follow the same objects, and make their own lives to be mere continuations of the follies of their sires. Moreover, Israel was but one nation in all time, and the confession which follows sets forth the national rather than the personal sin of the Lord's people. They enjoyed national privileges, and therefore they shared in national guilt. "*We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.*" Thus is the confession repeated three times, in token of the sincerity and heartiness of it. Sins of omission, commission, and rebellion we ought to acknowledge under distinct heads, that we may show a due sense of the number and heinousness of our offences.

7. "*Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt.*" The Israelites saw the miraculous plagues and ignorantly wondered at them: their design of love, their deep moral and spiritual lessons, and their revelation of the divine power and justice they were unable to perceive. A long sojourn among idolaters had blunted the perceptions of the chosen family, and cruel slavery had ground them down into mental sluggishness. Alas, how many of God's wonders are not understood, or misunderstood by us still. We fear the sons are no great improvement upon the sires. We inherit from our fathers much sin and little wisdom; they could only leave us what they themselves possessed. We see from this verse that a want of understanding is no excuse for sin, but is itself one count in the indictment against Israel. "*They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies.*" The sin of the understanding leads on to the sin of the memory. What is not understood will soon be forgotten. Men feel little interest in preserving husks; if they know nothing of the inner kernel they will take no care of the shells. It was an aggravation of Israel's sin that when God's mercies were so numerous they yet were able to forget them all. Surely some out of such a multitude of benefits ought to have remained engraven upon their hearts; but if grace does not give us understanding, nature will soon cast out the memory of God's great goodness. "*But provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.*" To fall out at starting was a bad sign. Those who did not begin well can hardly be expected to end well. Israel is not quite out of Egypt, and yet she begins to provoke the Lord by doubting his power to deliver, and questioning his faithfulness to his promise. The sea was only *called* Red, but their sins were scarlet in reality; it was known as the "sea of weeds," but far worse weeds grew in their hearts.

8. "*Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.*" When he could find no other reason for his mercy he found it in his own glory, and seized the opportunity to display his power. If Israel does not deserve to be saved, yet Pharaoh's pride needs to be crushed, and therefore Israel shall be delivered. The Lord very jealously guards his own name and honour. It shall never be said of him that he cannot or will not save his people, or that he cannot abate the haughtiness of his defiant foes. This respect unto his own honour ever leads him to deeds of mercy, and hence we may well rejoice that he is a jealous God.

9. "*He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up.*" A word did it. The

sea heard his voice and obeyed. How many rebukes of God are lost upon *us!* Are *we* not more unmanageable than the ocean? God did, as it were, chide the sea, and say, "Wherefore dost thou stop the way of my people? Their path to Canaan lies through thy channel, how darest thou hinder them?" The sea perceived its Master and his seed royal, and made way at once. "*So he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.*" As if it had been the dry floor of the desert the tribes passed over the bottom of the gulf; nor was their passage venturesome, for HE bade them go; nor dangerous, for HE led them. We also have under divine protection passed through many trials and afflictions, and with the Lord as our guide we have experienced no fear and endured no perils. We have been led through the deeps as through the wilderness.

10. "*And he saved them from the hand of them that hated them.*" Pharaoh was drowned, and the power of Egypt so crippled that throughout the forty years' wanderings of Israel they were never threatened by their old masters. "*And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.*" This was a redemption by power, and one of the most instructive types of the redemption of the Lord's people from sin and hell by the power which worketh in them.

11. "*And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.*" The Lord does nothing by halves. What he begins he carries through to the end. This, again, made Israel's sin the greater, because they saw the thoroughness of the divine justice, and the perfection of the divine faithfulness. In the covering of their enemies we have a type of the pardon of our sins; they are sunk as in the sea, never to rise again; and, blessed be the Lord, there is "not one of them left."—Not one sin of thought, or word, or deed, the blood of Jesus has covered all. "I will cast their iniquities into the depths of the sea."

12. "*Then believed they his words.*" That is to say, they believed the promise when they saw it fulfilled, but not till then. This is mentioned, not to their credit, but to their shame. Those who do not believe the Lord's word till they see it performed are not believers at all. Who would not believe when the fact stares them in the face? The Egyptians would have done as much as this. "*They sang his praise.*" How could they do otherwise? Their song was very excellent, and is the type of the song of heaven; but sweet as it was, it was quite as short, and when it was ended they fell to murmuring. "They sang his praise," but "they soon forgat his works." Between Israel singing and Israel sinning there was scarce a step. Their song was good while it lasted, but it was no sooner begun than over.

13 They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel;

14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

15 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

13. "*They soon forgat his works.*" They seemed in a hurry to get the Lord's mercies out of their memories; they hasted to be ungrateful. "*They waited not for his counsel,*" neither waiting for the word of command or promise; eager to have their own way, and prone to trust in themselves. This is a common fault in the Lord's family to this day; we are long in learning to wait *for* the Lord, and *upon* the Lord. With him is counsel and strength, but we are vain enough to look for these to ourselves, and therefore we grievously err.

14. "*But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness.*" Though they would not wait God's will, they are hot to have their own. When the most suitable and pleasant food was found them in abundance, it did not please them long, but they grew dainty and sniffed at angel's food, and must needs have flesh to eat, which was unhealthy diet for that warm climate, and for their easy life. This desire

of theirs they dwelt upon till it became a mania with them, and, like a wild horse, carried away its rider. For a meal of meat they were ready to curse their God and renounce the land which floweth with milk and honey. What a wonder that the Lord did not take them at their word! It is plain that they vexed him greatly, "*And tempted God in the desert.*" In the place where they were absolutely dependent upon him and were every day fed by his direct provision, they had the presumption to provoke their God. They would have him change the plans of his wisdom, supply their sensual appetites, and work miracles to meet their wicked unbelief: these things the Lord would not do, but they went as far as they could in trying to induce him to do so. They failed not in their wicked attempt because of any goodness in themselves, but because God "cannot be tempted,"—temptation has no power over him, he yields not to man's threats or promises.

15. "*And he gave them their request.*" Prayer may be answered in anger and denied in love. That God gives a man his desire is no proof that he is the object of divine favour, everything depends upon what that desire is. "*But sent leanness into their soul.*" Ah, that "but!" It embittered all. The meat was poison to them when it came without a blessing; whatever it might do in fattening the body, it was poor stuff when it made the soul lean. If we must know scantiness, may God grant it may not be scantiness of soul: yet this is a common attendant upon worldly prosperity. When wealth grows with many a man his worldly estate is fatter, but his soul's state is leaner. To gain silver and lose gold is a poor increase; but to win for the body and lose for the soul is far worse. How earnestly might Israel have unprayed her prayers had she known what would come with their answer! The prayers of lust will have to be wept over. We fret and fume till we have our desire, and then we have to fret still more because the attainment of it ends in bitter disappointment.

16 They envied Moses also in the camp, *and* Aaron the saint of the LORD.

17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

18 And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.

16. "*They envied Moses also in the camp.*" Though to him as the Lord's chosen instrument they owed everything, they grudged him the authority which it was needful that he should exercise for their good. Some were more openly rebellious than others, and became leaders of the mutiny, but a spirit of dissatisfaction was general, and therefore the whole nation is charged with it. Who can hope to escape envy when the meekest of men was subject to it? How unreasonable was this envy, for Moses was the one man in all the camp who laboured hardest and had most to bear. They should have sympathised with him; to envy him was ridiculous. "*And Aaron the saint of the* LORD." By divine choice Aaron was set apart to be holiness unto the Lord, and instead of thanking God that he had favoured them with a high priest by whose intercession their prayers would be presented, they cavilled at the divine election, and quarrelled with the man who was to offer sacrifice for them. Thus neither church nor state was ordered aright for them; they would snatch from Moses his sceptre, and from Aaron his mitre. It is the mark of bad men that they are envious of the good, and spiteful against their best benefactors.

17. "*The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.*" Korah is not mentioned, for mercy was extended to his household, though he himself perished. The earth could no longer bear up under the weight of these rebels and ingrates: God's patience was exhausted when they began to assail his servants, for his children are very dear to him, and he that toucheth them touches the apple of his eye. Moses had opened the sea for

their deliverance, and now that they provoke him, the earth opens for their destruction. It was time that the nakedness of their sins was covered, and that the earth should open her mouth to devour those who opened their mouths against the Lord and his servants.

18. "*And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.*" The Levites who were with Korah perished by fire, which was a most fitting death for those who intruded into the priesthood, and so offered strange fire. God has more than one arrow in his quiver, the fire can consume those whom the earthquake spares. These terrible things in righteousness are mentioned here to show the obstinacy of the people in continuing to rebel against the Lord. Terrors were as much lost upon them as mercies had been; they could neither be drawn nor driven.

19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

21 They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, *and* terrible things by the Red sea.

23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them.*

19. "*They made a calf in Horeb.*" In the very place where they had solemnly pledged themselves to obey the Lord they broke the second, if not the first, of his commandments, and set up the Egyptian symbol of the ox, and bowed before it. The ox image is here sarcastically called "a calf"; idols are worthy of no respect, scorn is never more legitimately used than when it is poured upon all attempts to set forth the Invisible God. The Israelites were foolish indeed when they thought they saw the slightest divine glory in a bull, nay, in the mere image of a bull. To believe that the image of a bull could be the image of God must need great credulity. "*And worshipped the molten image.*" Before it they paid divine honours, and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel." This was sheer madness. After the same fashion the Ritualists must needs set up their symbols and multiply them exceedingly. Spiritual worship they seem unable to apprehend; their worship is sensuous to the highest degree, and appeals to eye, and ear, and nose. O the folly of men to block up their own way to acceptable worship, and to make the path of spiritual religion, which is hard to our nature, harder still through the stumblingblocks which they cast into it. We have heard the richness of Popish paraphernalia much extolled, but an idolatrous image when made of gold is not one jot the less abominable than it would have been had it been made of dross and dung: the beauty of art cannot conceal the deformity of sin. We are told also of the suggestiveness of their symbols, but what of that, when God forbids the use of them? Vain also is it to plead that such worship is *hearty.* So much the worse. Heartiness in forbidden actions is only an increase of transgression.

20. "*Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.*" They said that they only meant to worship the one God under a fitting and suggestive similitude by which his great power would be set forth to the multitude; they pleaded the great Catholic revival which followed upon this return to a more ornate ceremonial, for the people thronged around Aaron, and danced before the calf with all their might. But in very deed they had given up the true God, whom it had been their glory to adore, and had set up a rival

to him, not a representation of him; for how should he be likened to a bullock? The psalmist is very contemptuous, and justly so: irreverence towards idols is an indirect reverence to God. False gods, attempts to represent the true God, and indeed, all material things which are worshipped, are so much filth upon the face of the earth, whether they be crosses, crucifixes, virgins, wafers, relics, or even the Pope himself. We are by far too mealy-mouthed about these infamous abominations: God abhors them, and so should we. To renounce the glory of spiritual worship for outward pomp and show is the height of folly, and deserves to be treated as such.

21, 22. "*They forgat God their saviour.*" Remembering the calf involved forgetting God. He had commanded them to make no image, and in daring to disobey they forgot his commands. Moreover, it is clear that they must altogether have forgotten the nature and character of Jehovah, or they could never have likened him to a grass-eating animal. Some men hope to keep their sins and their God too—the fact being that he who sins is already so far departed from the Lord that he has actually forgotten him. "*Which had done great things in Egypt.*" God in Egypt had overcome all the idols, and yet they so far forgot him as to liken him to them. Could an ox work miracles? Could a golden calf cast plagues upon Israel's enemies? They were brutish to set up such a wretched mockery of deity, after having seen what the true God could really achieve. "*Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.*" They saw several ranges of miracles, the Lord did not stint them as to the evidences of his eternal power and godhead, and yet they could not rest content with worshipping him in his own appointed way, but must needs have a *Directory* of their own invention, an elaborate ritual after the old Egyptian fashion, and a manifest object of worship to assist them in adoring Jehovah. This was enough to provoke the Lord, and it did so; how much he is angered every day in our own land no tongue can tell.

23. "*Therefore he said that he would destroy them.*" The threatening of destruction came at last. For the first wilderness sin he chastened them, sending leanness into their soul; for the second he weeded out the offenders, the flame burned up the wicked; for the third he threatened to destroy them; for the fourth he lifted up his hand and almost came to blows (verse 26); for the fifth he actually smote them, "and the plague brake in among them"; and so the punishment increased with their perseverance in sin. This is worth noting, and it should serve as a warning to the man who goeth on in his iniquities. God tries words before he comes to blows, "he *said* that he would destroy them": but his words are not to be trifled with, for he means them, and has power to make them good. "*Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach.*" Like a bold warrior who defends the wall when there is an opening for the adversary and destruction is rushing in upon the city, Moses stopped the way of avenging justice with his prayers. Moses had great power with God. He was an eminent type of our Lord, who is called, as Moses here is styled, "mine *elect*, in whom my soul delighteth." As the Elect Redeemer interposed between the Lord and a sinful world, so did Moses stand between the Lord and his offending people. The story as told by Moses himself is full of interest and instruction, and tends greatly to magnify the goodness of the Lord, who thus suffered himself to be turned from the fierceness of his anger.

With disinterested affection, and generous renunciation of privileges offered to himself and his family, the great Lawgiver interceded with the Lord "*to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.*" Behold the power of a righteous man's intercession. Mighty as was the sin of Israel to provoke vengeance, prayer was mightier in turning it away. How diligently ought we to plead with the Lord for this guilty world, and especially for his own backsliding people! Who would not employ an agency so powerful for an end so gracious! The Lord still hearkens to the voice of a man, shall not our voices be often exercised in supplicating for a guilty people?

24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:

25 But murmured in their tents, *and* hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

24. "*Yea, they despised the pleasant land.*" They spoke lightly of it, though it was the joy of all lands: they did not think it worth the trouble of seeking and conquering; they even spoke of Egypt, the land of their iron bondage, as though they preferred it to Canaan, the land which floweth with milk and honey. It is an ill sign with a Christian when he begins to think lightly of heaven and heavenly things; it indicates a perverted mind, and it is, moreover, a high offence to the Lord to despise that which he esteems so highly that he in infinite love reserves it for his own chosen. To prefer earthly things to heavenly blessings is to prefer Egypt to Canaan, the house of bondage to the land of promise. "*They believed not his word.*" This is the root sin. If we do not believe the Lord's word, we shall think lightly of his promised gifts. "They could not enter in because of unbelief"—this was the key which turned the lock against them. When pilgrims to the Celestial City begin to doubt the Lord of the way, they soon come to think little of the rest at the journey's end, and this is the surest way to make them bad travellers. Israel's unbelief demanded spies to see the land; the report of those spies was of a mingled character, and so a fresh crop of unbelief sprang up, with consequences most deplorable.

25. "*But murmured in their tents.*" From unbelief to murmuring is a short and natural step; they even fell to weeping when they had the best ground for rejoicing. Murmuring is a great sin and not a mere weakness: it contains within itself unbelief, pride, rebellion, and a whole host of sins. It is a home sin, and is generally practised by complainers "in their tents," but it is just as evil there as in the streets, and will be quite as grievous to the Lord. "*And hearkened not unto the voice of the* LORD." Making a din with their own voices, they refused attention to their best Friend. Murmurers are bad hearers.

26, 27. "*Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness.*" He swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest; he commenced his work of judgment upon them, and they began to die. Only let God lift his hand against a man and his day has come: he falls terribly whom Jehovah overthrows. "*To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.*" Foreseeing that their descendants would reproduce their sins, he solemnly declared that he would give them over to captivity and the sword. Those whose carcases fell in the wilderness were, in a sense, exiles from the land of promise, and, being surrounded by many hostile tribes, they were virtually in a foreign land: to die far off from their father's inheritance was a just and weighty doom, which their rebellions had richly deserved. Our own loss of fellowship with God, and the divisions in our churches, doubtless often come to us as punishments for the sins out of which they grow. If we will not honour the Lord we cannot expect him to honour us. Our captains shall soon become captives, and our princes shall be prisoners if we forget the Lord and despise his mercies. Our singing shall be turned into sighing, and our mirth into misery if we walk contrary to the mind of the Lord.

28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.

30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and *so* the plague was stayed.

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.

28. "*They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor.*" Ritualism led on to the adoration of false gods. If we choose a false way of worship we shall, ere long, choose to worship a false god. This abomination of the Moabites was an idol in whose worship women gave up their bodies to the most shameless lust. Think of the people of a holy God coming down to this. "*And ate the sacrifices of the dead.*" In the orgies with which the Baalites celebrated their detestable worship Israel joined, partaking even in their sacrifices as earnest inner-court worshippers, though the gods were but dead idols. Perhaps they assisted in necromantic rites which were intended to open a correspondence with departed spirits, thus endeavouring to break the seal of God's providence, and burst into the secret chambers which God has shut up. Those who are weary of seeking the living God have often shown a hankering after dark sciences, and have sought after fellowship with demons and spirits. To what strong delusions those are often given up who cast off the fear of God! This remark is as much needed now as in days gone by.

29. "*Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.*" Open licentiousness and avowed idolatry were too gross to be winked at. This time the offences clamoured for judgment, and the judgment came at once. Twenty-four thousand persons fell before a sudden and deadly disease which threatened to run through the whole camp. Their new sins brought on them a disease new to their tribes. When men invent sins God will not be slow to invent punishments. Their vices were a moral pest, and they were visited with a bodily pest: so the Lord meets like with its like.

30. "*Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.*" God has his champions left in the worst times, and they will stand up when the time comes for them to come forth to battle. His righteous indignation moved him to a quick execution of two open offenders. His honest spirit could not endure that lewdness should be publicly practised at a time when a fast had been proclaimed. Such daring defiance of God and of all law he could not brook, and so with his sharp javelin he transfixed the two guilty ones in the very act. It was a holy passion which inflamed him, and no enmity to either of the persons whom he slew. The circumstances were so remarkable and the sin so flagrant that it would have involved great sin in a public man to have stood still and seen God thus defied, and Israel thus polluted. Phinehas was not of this mind, he was no trimmer, or palliator of sin, his heart was sound in God's statutes, and his whole nature was ablaze with zeal for God's glory, and therefore, though a priest, and therefore not obliged to be an executioner, he undertook the unwelcome task, and though both transgressors were of princely stock he had no respect of persons, but dealt justice upon them as if they had been the lowest of the people. This brave and decided deed was so acceptable to God as a proof that there were some sincere souls in Israel that the deadly visitation went no further. Two deaths had sufficed to save the lives of the multitude.

31. "*And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.*" Down to the moment when this psalm was penned the house of Phinehas was honoured in Israel. His faith had performed a valorous deed, and his righteousness was testified of the Lord, and honoured by the continuance of his family in the priesthood. He was impelled by motives so pure that what would otherwise have been a deed of blood was justified in the sight of God; nay, more, was made *the* evidence that Phinehas was righteous. No

personal ambition, or private revenge, or selfish passion, or even fanatical bigotry, inspired the man of God, but zeal for God, indignation at open filthiness, and true patriotism urged him on.

Once again we have cause to note the mercy of God that even when his warrant was out, and actual execution was proceeding, he stayed his hand at the suit of one man: finding, as it were, an apology for his grace when justice seemed to demand immediate vengeance.

32 They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

32. "*They angered him also at the waters of strife.*" Will they never have done? The scene changes, but the sin continues. Aforetime they had mutinied about water when prayer would soon have turned the desert into a standing pool, but now they do it again after their former experience of the divine goodness. This made the sin a double, yea a sevenfold offence, and caused the anger of the Lord to be the more intense. "*So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes.*" Moses was at last wearied out, and began to grow angry with them, and utterly hopeless of their ever improving; can we wonder at it, for he was man and not God? After forty years bearing with them the meek man's temper gave way, and he called them rebels, and showed unhallowed anger; and therefore he was not permitted to enter the land which he desired to inherit. Truly, he had a sight of the goodly country from the top of Pisgah, but entrance was denied him, and thus it went ill with him. It was *their* sin which angered him, but *he* had to bear the consequences; however clear it may be that others are more guilty than ourselves, we should always remember that this will not screen *us*, but every man must bear his own burden.

33. "*Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.*" Which seems a small sin compared with that of others, but then it was the sin of Moses, the Lord's chosen servant, who had seen and known so much of the Lord, and therefore it could not be passed by. He did not speak blasphemously, or falsely, but only hastily and without care; but this is a serious fault in a lawgiver, and especially in one who speaks for God. This passage is to our mind one of the most terrible in the Bible. Truly we serve a jealous God. Yet he is not a hard master, or austere; we must not think so, but we must the rather be jealous of ourselves, and watch that we live the more carefully, and speak the more advisedly, because we serve such a Lord. We ought also to be very careful how we treat the ministers of the gospel, lest by provoking their spirit we should drive them into any unseemly behaviour which should bring upon them the chastisement of the Lord. Little do a murmuring, quarrelsome people dream of the perils in which they involve their pastors by their untoward behaviour.

34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them:

35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,

38 And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.

39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

41 And he gave them into the hands of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

34. "*They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the* LORD *commanded them.*" They were commissioned to act as executioners upon races condemned for their unnatural crimes, and through sloth, cowardice, or sinful complacency they sheathed the sword too soon, very much to their own danger and disquietude. It is a great evil with professors that they are not zealous for the total destruction of all sin within and without. We make alliances of peace where we ought to proclaim war to the knife; we plead our constitutional temperament, our previous habits, the necessity of our circumstances, or some other evil excuse as an apology for being content with a very partial sanctification, if indeed it be sanctification at all. We are slow also to rebuke sin in others, and are ready to spare respectable sins, which like Agag walk with mincing steps. The measure of our destruction of sin is not to be our inclination, or the habit of others, but the Lord's command. We have no warrant for dealing leniently with any sin, be it what it may.

35. "*But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.*" It was not the wilderness which caused Israel's sins; they were just as disobedient when settled in the land of promise. They found evil company, and delighted in it. Those whom they should have destroyed they made their friends. Having enough faults of their own, they were yet ready to go to school to the filthy Canaanites, and educate themselves still more in the arts of iniquity. It was certain that they could learn no good from men whom the Lord had condemned to utter destruction. Few would wish to go to the condemned cell for learning, yet Israel sat at the feet of accursed Canaan, and rose up proficient in every abomination. This, too, is a grievous but common error among professors: they court worldly company and copy worldly fashions, and yet it is their calling to bear witness against these things. None can tell what evil has come of the folly of worldly conformity.

36. "*And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.*" They were fascinated by the charms of idolatry, though it brings misery upon its votaries. A man cannot serve sin without being ensnared by it. It is like birdlime, and to touch it is to be taken by it. Samson laid his head in the Philistine woman's lap, but ere long he woke up shorn of his strength. Dalliance with sin is fatal to spiritual liberty.

37 and 38. "*Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.*" This was being snared indeed; they were spell-bound by the cruel superstition, and were carried so far as even to become murderers of their own children, in honour of the most detestable deities, which were rather devils than gods. "*And shed innocent blood.*" The poor little ones whom they put to death in sacrifice had not been partakers of their sin, and God looked with the utmost indignation upon the murder of the innocent. "*Even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan.*" Who knows how far evil will go? It drove men to be unnatural as well as ungodly. Had they but thought for a moment, they must have seen that a deity who could be pleased with the blood of babes spilt by their own sires could not be a deity at all, but must be a demon, worthy to be detested and not adored.

How could they prefer such service to that of Jehovah? Did *he* tear their babes from their bosoms and smile at their death throes? Men will sooner wear the iron yoke of Satan than carry the pleasant burden of the Lord; does not this prove to a demonstration the deep depravity of their hearts? If man be not totally depraved, what worse would he do if he were? Does not this verse describe the *ne plus ultra* of iniquity? "*And the land was polluted with blood.*" The promised land, the holy land, which was the glory of all lands, for God was there, was defiled with the reeking gore of innocent babes, and by the blood-red hands of their parents, who slew them in order to pay homage to devils. Alas! alas! What vexation was this to the spirit of the Lord.

39. "*Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.*" Not only the land but the inhabitants of it were polluted. They broke the marriage bond between them and the Lord, and fell into spiritual adultery. The language is strong, but the offence could not be fitly described in less forcible words. As a husband is deeply dishonoured and sorely wounded should his wife become unchaste and run riot with many paramours in his own house, so was the Lord incensed at his people for setting up gods many and lords many in his own land. They made and invented new gods, and then worshipped what they had made. What a folly! Their novel deities were loathsome monsters and cruel demons, and yet they paid them homage. What wickedness! And to commit this folly and wickedness they cast off the true God, whose miracles they had seen, and whose people they were. This was provocation of the severest sort.

40, 41. "*Therefore was the wrath of the* LORD *kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.*" Not that even then he broke his covenant or utterly cast off his offending people, but he felt the deepest indignation, and even looked upon them with abhorrence. The feeling described is like to that of a husband who still loves his guilty wife, and yet when he thinks of her lewdness feels his whole nature rising in righteous anger at her, so that the very sight of her afflicts his soul. How far the divine wrath can burn against those whom he yet loves in his heart it were hard to say, but certainly Israel pushed the experiment to the extreme. "*And he gave them into the hand of the heathen.*" This was the manifestation of his abhorrence. He gave them a taste of the result of sin; they spared the heathen, mixed with them and imitated them, and soon they had to smart from them, for hordes of invaders were let loose upon them to spoil them at their pleasure. Men make rods for their own backs. Their own inventions become their punishments. "*And they that hated them ruled over them.*" And who could wonder? Sin never creates true love. They joined the heathen in their wickedness, and they did not win their hearts, but rather provoked their contempt. If we mix with men of the world they will soon become our masters and our tyrants, and we cannot want worse.

42. "*Their enemies also oppressed them.*" This was according to their nature; an Israelite always fares ill at the hands of the heathen. Leniency to Canaan turned out to be cruelty to themselves. "*And they were brought into subjection under their hand.*" They were bowed down by laborious bondage, and made to lie low under tyranny. In their God they had found a kind master, but in those with whom they had perversely sought fellowship they found despots of the most barbarous sort. He who leaves his God leaves happiness for misery. God can make our enemies to be rods in his hands to flog us back to our best Friend.

43. "*Many times did he deliver them.*" By reading the book of Judges we shall see how truthful is this sentence: again and again their foes were routed, and they were set free again, only to return with vigour to their former evil ways. "*But they provoked him with their counsel.*" With deliberation they agreed to transgress anew; self-will was their counsellor, and they followed it to their own destruction. "*And were brought low for their iniquity.*" Worse and worse were the evils brought upon them, lower and lower they fell in sin,

and consequently in sorrow. In dens and caves of the earth they hid themselves; they were deprived of all warlike weapons, and were utterly despised by their conquerors: they were rather a race of serfs than of free men until the Lord in mercy raised them up again. Could we but fully know the horrors of the wars which desolated Palestine, and the ravages which caused famine and starvation, we should shudder at the sins which were thus rebuked. Deeply engrained in their nature must the sin of idolatry have been, or they would not have returned to it with such persistence in the teeth of such penalties: we need not marvel at this, there is a still greater wonder, man prefers sin and hell to heaven and God.

The lesson to ourselves, as God's people, is to walk humbly and carefully before the Lord, and above all to keep ourselves from idols. Woe unto those who become partakers of Rome's idolatries, for they will be joined with her in her plagues. May grace be given to *us* to keep the separated path, and remain undefiled with the fornication of the scarlet harlot of Babylon.

44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise.

44. "*Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.*" Notwithstanding all these provoking rebellions and detestable enormities the Lord still heard their prayer and pitied them. This is very wonderful, very godlike. One would have thought that the Lord would have shut out their prayer, seeing they had shut their ears against his admonitions; but no, he had a father's heart, and a sight of their sorrows touched his soul, the sound of their cries overcame his heart, and he looked upon them with compassion. His fiercest wrath towards his own people is only a temporary flame, but his love burns on for ever like the light of his own immortality.

45. "*And he remembered for them his covenant.*" The covenant is the sure foundation of mercy, and when the whole fabric of outward grace manifested in the saints lies in ruins this is the fundamental basis of love which is never moved, and upon it the Lord proceeds to build again a new structure of grace. Covenant mercy is sure as the throne of God. "*And repented according to the multitude of his mercies.*" He did not carry out the destruction which he had commenced. Speaking after the manner of men he changed his mind, and did not leave them to their enemies to be utterly cut off, because he saw that his covenant would in such a case have been broken. The Lord is so full of grace that he has not only mercy but mercies, yea a multitude of them, and these hive in the covenant and treasure up good for the erring sons of men.

46. "*He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.*" Having the hearts of all men in his hands he produced compassion even in heathen bosoms. Even as he found Joseph friends in Egypt, so did he raise up sympathisers for his captive servants. In our very worst condition our God has ways and means for allaying the severity of our sorrows: he can find us helpers among those who have been our oppressors, and he will do so if we be indeed his people.

47. This is the closing prayer, arranged by prophecy for those who would in future time be captives, and suitable for all who before David's days had been driven from home by the tyranny of Saul, or who had remained in exile after

the various scatterings by famine and distress which had happened in the iron age of the judges. "*Save us, O* LORD *our God.*" The mention of the covenant encouraged the afflicted to call the Lord their God, and this enabled them with greater boldness to entreat him to interpose on their behalf and rescue them. "*And gather us from among the heathen.*" Weary now of the ungodly and their ways, they long to be brought into their own separated country, where they might again enjoy the means of grace, enter into holy fellowship with their brethren, escape from contaminating examples, and be free to wait upon the Lord. How often do true believers now-a-days long to be removed from ungodly households, where their souls are vexed with the conversation of the wicked. "*To give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.*" Weaned from idols, they desire to make mention of Jehovah's name alone, and to ascribe their mercies to his ever abiding faithfulness and love. The Lord had often saved them for his holy name's sake, and therefore they feel that when again restored they would render all their gratitude to that saving name, yea, it should be their glory to praise Jehovah and none else.

48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

48. "*Blessed be the* LORD *God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting.*" Has not his mercy endured for ever, and should not his praise be of like duration? Jehovah, the God of Israel, has blessed his people, should they not also bless him? "*And let all the people say, Amen.*" They have all been spared by his grace, let them all join in the adoration with loud unanimous voice. What a thunder of praise would thus be caused! Yet should a nation thus magnify him, yea, should all the nations past and present unite in the solemn acclaim, it would fall far short of his deserts. O for the happy day when all flesh shall see the glory of God, and all shall aloud proclaim his praise. "*Praise ye the* LORD," or "*Hallelujah.*"

Reader, praise thou the Lord, as he who writes this feeble exposition now does with his whole heart.

"Now blest, for ever blest, be He,
The same throughout eternity,
Our Israel's God adored!
Let all the people join the lay,
And loudly, 'Hallelujah,' say,
'Praise ye the living Lord!'"

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Verse 1.—"*For he is good;*" essentially, solely and originally; is communicative and diffusive of his goodness; is the author of all good and no evil; and is gracious and merciful and ready to forgive.—*John Gill.*

Verse 1.—"*For he is good: for his goodness endureth for ever.*" Observe here what is a true and perfect confession of the divine goodness. Whenever God so blesses his own people that his goodness is perceived by carnal sense, in bestowing riches, honours, peace, health and things of that kind, then it is easy to acknowledge that God is good, and that acknowledgment can be made by the most carnal men. The case stands otherwise when he visits offenders with the rod of correction and scourges them with the grace of chastisement. Then the flesh hardly bears to confess what by its own sense it does not perceive. It fails to discern the goodness of God unto salvation in the severity of the rod

and the scourging, and therefore refuses to acknowledge that goodness in strokes and sufferings. The prophet, however, throughout this Psalm celebrates in many instances the way wherein the sinning people were arrested and smitten. And when he proposed that this Psalm should be sung in the church of God, Israel was under the cross and afflictions. Yet he demands that Israel should acknowledge that the Lord is good, that his mercy endureth for ever, even in the act of smiting the offender. That therefore alone is a true and full confession of the divine goodness which is made not only in prosperity but also in adversity.—*Musculus.*

Verses 1—3.—There is, (1.) The doxology; (2.) Invitation; (3.) The reason that we should, and why we should, give thanks always; (4.) The greatness of the work. But "who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? who can shew forth all his praise?" That is, it is impossible for any man in the world to do this great duty aright, as he should. (5.) The best mode and method of giving thanks. "Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times." As if he had said, "This is indeed a vast duty; but yet *he* makes the best essay towards it that sets himself constantly to serve God and keep his commandments."—*William Cooper, in the "Morning Exercises."*

Verses 1, 47, 48.—The first and two last verses of this psalm form a part of that psalm which David delivered into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to be sung before the ark of the covenant, after it was brought from the house of Obed-edom to Mount Zion. See 1 Chron. xvi. 34—36. Hence it has been ascribed to the pen of David. Many of the ancients thought, and they are followed by Horsley and Mudge, that it was written during the captivity; resting their opinion chiefly on verse 47; but as that verse occurs in the Psalm of David recorded in 1 Chron. xvi., at the 35th verse, this argument is clearly without force.—*James Anderson's Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 2.—"*Who can utter?*" etc. This verse is susceptible of two interpretations; for if you read it in connection with the one immediately following, the sense will be, that all men are not alike equal to the task of praising God, because the ungodly and the wicked do nothing else than profane his holy name with their unclean lips; as it is said in the fiftieth psalm: "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" And hence to this sentence the following clause should have been annexed, in the form of a reply, "Blessed are they that keep judgment." I am of opinion, however, that the prophet had another design, namely, that there is no man who has ever endeavoured to concentrate all his energies, both physical and mental, in the praising of God, but will find himself inadequate for so lofty a subject, the transcendant grandeur of which overpowers all our senses. Not that he exalts the power of God designedly to deter us from celebrating its praises, but rather as the means of stirring us up to do so to the utmost of our power. Is it any reason for ceasing our exertions, that with whatever alacrity we pursue our course, we yet come far short of perfection? But the thing which ought to inspire us with the greatest encouragement is the knowledge that, though ability may fail us, the praises which from the heart we offer to God are pleasing to him; only let us beware of callousness; for it would certainly be very absurd for those who cannot attain to a tithe of perfection, to make that the occasion of their not reaching to the hundredth part of it.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 2.—"*Who can utter the mighty acts of the* LORD?" etc. Our sight fails us when we look upon the sun, overpowered by the splendour of his ways; and the mind's eye suffers the like in every meditation on God, and the more attention is bestowed in thinking of God, the more is the mental vision blinded by the very light of its own thoughts. For what canst thou say of him, what, I repeat, canst thou adequately say of him, who is sublimer than all loftiness, and more exalted than all height, and deeper than all depth, and clearer than

all light, and brighter than all brightness, and more splendid than all splendour, stronger than all strength, more vigorous than all vigour, fairer than all beauty, truer than all truth, and more puissant than puissance, and greater than all majesty, and mightier than all might, richer than all riches, wiser than all wisdom, gentler than all gentleness, juster than all justice, more merciful than all mercy?—*Tertullian, quoted by Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 2.—"*Who can utter the mighty acts of the* LORD?" etc. This may be resolved either into a negation or restriction. Few or none can "utter the mighty acts of the LORD," can "show forth all his praise"; few can do it in an acceptable manner, and none can do it in a perfect manner. And indeed it is not unusual in Scripture for such kind of interrogations to amount unto either a negation, or at least an expression of the rareness and difficulty of the thing spoken of: 1 Cor. ii. 16; Ps. xcii.; Isai. liii. 1. Without a full confession of mercies it is not possible to make either a due valuation of them, or a just requital of them. And how impossible a thing it is fully to recount mercies, you may see by Psal. xl. 5; "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."—*Henry Jeanes, in "The Works of Heaven upon Earth,"* 1649.

Verse 2.—"*Mighty acts of the Lord.*" Or *powers*, to which answers the Greek word for the miracles of Christ (Matt. xi. 20, 21), and Kimchi here restrains them to the wonders wrought in Egypt and at the Red Sea; but they may as well be extended to the mighty acts of God; and the effects of his power, in the creation of all things out of nothing; in the sustentation and government of the world; in the redemption of his people by Christ; in the conversion of sinners, and in the final perseverance of the saints; in all which there are such displays of the power of God as cannot be uttered and declared by mortal tongues.—*John Gill.*

Verse 3.—"*Blessed are they that keep judgment,*" etc. That are of right principles and upright practices; this is real and substantial praising of God. Thanks-doing is the proof of thanksgiving; and the good life of the thankful is the life of thankfulness. Those that say, God-a-thank only, and no more, are not only contumelious, but injurious.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3.—"*Keep judgment*"; "*doeth righteousness.*" I doubt not that there is some difference; viz. that he is said to keep judgment who judgeth rightly, but he to do righteousness who acts righteously.—*Augustine.*

Verse 3.—I have read of Louis, king of France, that when he had through inadvertency granted an unjust suit, as soon as ever he had read those words of the Psalmist, "*Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times,*" he presently recollected himself, and upon better thoughts gave his judgment quite contrary—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 4.—"*O visit me.*" This is a beautiful figure. The prayer is not, "Give me a more intense desire, increased energy of action, that I may please thee, that I may serve thee, that I may go step by step up to thee, every step bringing with it a fresh sense of meritorious claim upon thee." No such thing. It is "*Visit me*;" "descend down upon me" daily from thine own lofty throne, for the fulfilment of thine own purposes. "*Visit me.*"—*George Fisk*, 1851.

Verse 4.—"*O visit me with thy salvation.*" Hugo takes the *visit* of God as that of a physician of whom healing of the eyes is sought, because it is immediately added, "*That I may see,*" etc.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 4.—There is an ancient Jewish gloss which is noteworthy, that the petition is for a share in the resurrection in the days of Messiah, in order to see his wonderful restoration of his suffering people.—*Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 5.—We may note that the threefold nature of man prompts the union

of the three petitions of this verse in one. "*That I may see,*" is the prayer of the body, desiring the open vision of God; "*and rejoice,*" is the wish of the soul or mind, that the affections may likewise be gratified; *and give thanks,* as the spirit needs to pour itself out in worship. Further, there are three names here given to the saints, each for a reason of its own. They are God's "*chosen,*" because of his predestinating grace, "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. i. 4); they are his "*nation,*" having one law and one worship under him as sole king. "And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?" (Deut. iv. 8;) they are his "*inheritance,*" for it is written, "I shall give the heathen for thine inheritance" (Ps. ii. 8).—*Hugo Cardinalis and Albertus Magnus, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 5.—"*That I may see the good of thy chosen.*" That, having been predestined, and justified, we may come to see the good of thy chosen, which means that the very face of the Lord may be made conspicuous to us. "For we shall be then like him when we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2). By the "*good of thy chosen*" we are not to understand their own probity or goodness, but the supreme happiness that is their lot. "*That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation.*" That we may partake in that unspeakable joy which arises from the beatific vision, which is the peculiar property of the chosen people, of which strangers cannot taste, of which the gospel says, "Enter into the joy of thy Lord."—*Robert Bellarmine,* 1542—1621.

Verse 6.—"*We have sinned with our fathers.*" Let us look a little further back, to find the age of sin; even as far as the original, from whence comes all the copy of imitation. Be they never so new in act, they are old in example: "*We have sinned with our fathers.*" God tells them they had rebelled of old; "As your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts viii. 51). Antiquity is no infallible argument of goodness: though Tertullian says the first things were the best things; and the less they distanced from the beginning, the poorer they were; but he must be understood only of holy customs. For iniquity can plead antiquity: he that commits a new act of murder finds it old in the example of Cain; drunkenness may be fetched from Noah; contempt of parents from Ham; women's lightness from the daughters of Lot. There is no sin but hath white hairs upon it, and is exceeding old. But let us look further back yet, even to Adam; there is the age of sin. This is that St. Paul calls the old man; it is almost as old as the root, but older than all the branches. Therefore our restitution by Christ to grace is called the new man.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 6.—"*We have sinned with our fathers.*" It enhances the sin considerably by adding "*with our fathers.*" He would have seemed to extenuate, not exaggerate, if he had said, We have sinned with other mortals. But by saying, *We have sinned with our fathers,* he by no means lessens but aggravates their offences, while he thereby extols the goodness of God who blessed not only those who acted sinfully and impiously, but also the children and descendants of the sinful and impious, even those whom he could with the highest justice have cut off as doubly detestable.—*Musculus.*

Verse 6.—"*Sinned; committed iniquity; done wickedly.*" The Rabbins tell us that there are three kinds and degrees of sin here set down in an ascending scale; against one's self, against one's neighbour, against God; sins of ignorance, sins of conscious deliberation, sins of pride and wickedness.—*R. Levi and Genebrardus, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verses 6, 12, 13, 14, 21, 24.—Though the writers of the Scriptures were by divine inspiration infallibly preserved from extravagance, yet they use every appropriate variety of strong and condemnatory language against sin (ver. 6). Surely moral evil cannot be a trifle. Yet it breaks forth on all occasions and on all hands. Sometimes it is in the form of forgetfulness of God (ver. 13, 21), sometimes of rash impetuosity towards evil (ver. 13), sometimes of strong,

imperious lusts (ver. 14), sometimes of vile unbelief (ver. 12, 24), and so of the whole catalogue of offences against God and man. O how vile we are!—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 7.—"*Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt.*" Though the elders went along with Moses, and heard him shew his commission to Pharaoh, and make his demands in the name of the Lord to let Israel go, (Exod. iii. 16); yea, and they saw the judgments of God on Egypt; yet "*they did not understand*" that these wonders would do the work of their deliverance. At first they thought it was worse with them. Much less did they understand, that their deliverance should be a type of eternal deliverance, that God would be their God, as after is explained in the preface to the ten commandments. And because they "*understood not his wonders,*" therefore they "*remembered not his mercies.*" A shallow understanding causeth a short memory.—*Nathaniel Homes*, 1652.

Verse 7.—"*Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt.*" It is more than probable, that many of the Israelites ascribed most of these wonders to the skill of Moses transcending that of the Egyptian magicians, or to his working by the assistance of a higher and more potent spirit than that which assisted them. Or, in case they did believe them to have been the effects of a Divine Power, yet they did not inure their minds seriously to consider it, so as to have a standing awe of that power imprinted upon their hearts by such a consideration: and he that considers great and important matters superficially, in the language of the Scripture, does not *understand them.*—*Robert South.*

Verse 7.—"*Understood not*" . . . "*remembered not.*" He reproveth both their understanding and memory. Understanding there was need of, that they might meditate unto what eternal blessings God was calling them through these temporal ones; and of memory, that at least they might not forget the temporal wonders which had been wrought, and might faithfully believe, that by the same power which they had already experienced, God would free them from the persecution of their enemies; whereas they forgot the aid which he had given them in Egypt, by means of such wonders, to crush their enemies. —*Augustine.*

Verse 7.—One sin is a step to another more heinous; for *not observing*, is followed with *not remembering*, and *forgetfulness* of duty draweth on *disobedience* and rebellion.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 7.—"*They provoked him.*" *To provoke*, is an expression setting forth a peculiar and more than ordinary degree of misbehaviour, and seems to import an insolent daring resolution to offend. A resolution not contented with one single stroke of disobedience, but such a one as multiplies and repeats the action, till the offence greatens, and rises into an affront; and as it relates to God, so I conceive it as aimed at him in a threefold respect. 1st, Of his power. 2ndly, Of his goodness. 3rdly, Of his patience.

1st. And first it rises up against *the power and prerogative of God.* It is, as it were, an assault upon God sitting upon his throne, a snatching at his sceptre, and a defiance of his very royalty and supremacy. He that provokes God does in a manner dare him to strike, and to revenge the injury and invasion upon his honour. He considers not the weight of God's almighty arm, and the edge of his sword, the swiftness and poison of his arrows, but puffs at all, and looks the terrors of sin-revenging justice in the face. The Israelites could not sin against God, after those miracles in Egypt, without a signal provocation of that power that they had so late, and so convincing an experience of: a power that could have crushed an Israelite as easily as an Egyptian; and given as terrible an instance of its consuming force upon false friends, as upon professed enemies; in the sight of God, perhaps, the less sort of offenders of the two.

2ndly. Provoking God imports an abuse of *his goodness.* God, as he is clothed with power, is the proper object of our fear; but as he displays his

goodness, of our love. By one he would command, by the other he would win and (as it were) court our obedience. And an affront to his goodness, his tenderness, and his mercy, as much exceeds an affront of his power as a wound at the heart transcends a blow on the hand. For when God shall show miracles of mercy, step out of the common road of providence, commanding the host of heaven, the globe of the earth, and the whole system of nature out of its course, to serve a design of goodness upon a people, as he did upon the Israelites; was not a provocation, after such obliging passages, infinitely base and insufferable, and a degree of ingratitude, higher than the heavens struck at, and deeper than the sea that they passed through?

3rdly. Provoking God imports an affront upon *his longsuffering, and his patience.* The movings of nature in the breasts of mankind, tell us how keenly, how regretfully, every man resents the abuse of his love; how hardly any prince, but one, can put up an offence against his acts of mercy; and how much more affrontive it is to despise majesty ruling by the golden sceptre of pardon, than by the iron rod of penal law. But now patience is a further and an higher advance of mercy; it is mercy drawn out at length; mercy wrestling with baseness, and striving, if possible, even to weary and outdo ingratitude: and therefore a sin against this is the highest pitch, the utmost improvement, and, as I may so speak, the *ne plus ultra* of provocation. For when patience shall come to be tired, and even out of breath with pardoning, let all the invention of mankind find something further, either upon which an offender may cast his hope, or against which he can commit a sin. But it was God's patience the ungrateful Israelites sinned against; for they even plied and pursued him with sin upon sin, one offence following and thronging upon the neck of another, the last account still rising highest, and swelling bigger, till the treasures of grace and pardon were so far drained and exhausted, that they provoked God to *swear*, and what is more, *to swear in his wrath*, and with a full purpose of revenge, *that they should never enter into his rest.*—*Robert South.*

Verse 7.—"*They provoked him.*" Wherein lay their provocation? "*They remembered not the multitude of his mercies:*" the former mercies of the Lord did not strengthen their trust in present troubles; that was one provocation. And as former mercies did not strengthen their trust, so the present troubles drew out their distrust, as another Scripture assures, reporting their behaviour in it (Exod. xiv. 11,): "And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" What were these fearful forecasts, these amazing bodements of an unavoidable (as they apprehended) ruin, but the overflowings of unbelief, or distrust in God; and this was another provocation. Former mercies are forgotten, yea, eaten up by unbelief, as the seven lean kine in Pharaoh's dream, eat up the fat ones, and present difficulties are aggravated by unbelief, as if all the power of God could not remove and overcome them. And will not the Lord (think you) visit in anger such a sin as this?—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 7.—"*At the Red Sea.*" That is to say, *at the Arabian Gulph:* literally, *at the Sea of Suph*, which, if *Suph* be not here a proper name, (as it seems to be in Deut. i. 1, and, with a slight variation, in Numb. xxxi. 14,) means *the sea of weeds*, and that sea is still called by a similar name, in modern Egypt. Its designation, throughout the books of the Old Testament, is in the Syriac version, and the Chaldee Paraphrase, likewise rendered *the sea of weeds;* which name may have been derived from the reeds growing near its shore; or from the weeds, or coralline productions, with which, according to Diodorus Siculus, and Kircher, it abounded; and which were seen through its translucent waters. Finati, quoted by Laborde, speaks of the transparency of its waters, and the corals seen at its bottom. . . . . Pliny states, that it is called the Red Sea from King Erythras, or from the reflection of a red colour by the sun, or from its sand and its ground, or from the nature of its water.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verses 7, 8.—This psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving, as the first and last verses declare. Now because a man is most fit to praise God when he is most sensible of his own sin and unworthiness; the psalmist doth throughout this psalm lay Israel's sin and God's mercy together. Ver. 7, "*Our Fathers* (says he) *understood not thy wonders in Egypt.*" They saw them with their eyes, but they did not understand them with their heart; they did not apprehend the design and scope and end of God in those wonders: and therefore, "*they remembered not* (says the text) *thy mercies;*" for a man remembers no more than he understands.

But it may be these mercies were very few, and so their sin in forgetfulness the less? Nay, not so, for verse 7, "*They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies.*"

But it may be this was their infirmity or weakness, and so they were rather to be borne withal? Not so, "*but they rebelled against him;*" so Montanus reads it better.

But it may be this sin was committed whilst they were in Egypt, or among the Egyptians, being put on by them? Not so neither, but when they were come out of Egypt, and only had to deal with God, and saw his glorious power at the Red Sea, then they rebelled against him, "*at the sea, even at the Red Sea.*"

What, then, did not the Lord destroy them? No says the text, "*Notwithstanding*" all their grievance, unthankfulness, and their rebellion, "*he saved them for his name's sake.*"—*William Bridge, in a Sermon preached before the House of Commons, Nov.* 5, 1647.

Verse 8.—"*Nevertheless he saved them.*"—If God should not shew mercy to his people with a *nevertheless*, how should the glory of his mercy appear? If a physician should only cure a man that hath the head-ache or the tooth-ache; one that hath taken cold, or some small disease; it would not argue any great skill and excellency in the physician. But when a man is nigh unto death, hath one foot in the grave, or is, in the eye of reason, past all recovery; if then the physician cure him, it argues much the skill and excellency of that physician. So now, if God should only cure, and save a people that were less evil and wicked; or that were good indeed, where should the excellence of mercy appear? But when a people shall be drawing near to death, lying bed-rid, as it were, and the Lord out of his free love, for his own name's sake, shall rise, and cure such an unworthy people, this sets out the glory of his mercy. It is said in the verse precedent, "They rebelled at the sea, even at the Red Sea," or, as in the Hebrew, "even *in* the Red Sea;" when the waters stood like walls on both sides of them; when they saw those walls of waters that never people saw before, and saw the power, the infinite power of God leading them through on dry land; *then* did they rebel, at the sea, *even in* the sea; and yet for all this the Lord saved them with a *notwithstanding* all this. And I say, shall the Lord put forth so much of grace upon a people, that were under the law; and not put forth much more of his grace upon those that are under the gospel?—*William Bridge.*

Verse 8.—"*For his name's sake.*" Improve his name in every case; for he hath a name suiting every want, every need. Do you need wonders to be wrought for you? His name is Wonderful; look to him so to do, for his name's sake. Do you need counsel and direction? His name is the Counsellor: cast yourself on him and his name for this. Have you mighty enemies to debate with? His name is the Mighty God; seek that he may exert his power for his name's sake. Do you need his fatherly pity? His name is the everlasting Father; "As a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Plead his pity, for his name's sake. Do you need peace external, internal, or eternal? His name is the Prince of Peace; seek for his name's sake, that he may create peace. O sirs, his name is JEHOVAH-ROPHI, the Lord, the healer and physician; seek, for his name's sake, that he may heal all your

diseases. Do you need pardon? His name is JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, the Lord our righteousness: seek, for his name's sake, that he may be merciful to your unrighteousness. Do you need defence and protection? His name is JEHOVAH-NISSI, the Lord your banner; seek, for his name's sake, that his banner of love and grace may be spread over you. Do you need provision in extreme want? His name is JEHOVAH-JIREH, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, the Lord will provide. Do you need his presence? His name is JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, the Lord is there: IMMANUEL, God with us: look to him to be with you, for his name's sake. Do you need audience of prayer? His name is the Hearer of prayer. Do you need strength? His name is the Strength of Israel. Do you need comfort? His name is the Consolation of Israel. Do you need shelter? His name is the City of Refuge. Have you nothing and need all? His name is All in all. Sit down and devise names to your wants and needs, and you will find he hath a name suitable thereunto; for your supply, he hath wisdom to guide you; and power to keep you; mercy to pity you; truth to shield you; holiness to sanctify you; righteousness to justify you; grace to adorn you; and glory to crown you. Trust in his name, who saves for his name's sake.—*Ralph Erskine*, 1685—1752.

Verse 9.—"*He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up.*" A poetical expression, signifying that the Red Sea retired at God's command, just as a slave would fly from his master's presence on being severely rebuked.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 9.—"*He rebuked.*" We do not read that any voice was sent forth from heaven to rebuke the sea; but he hath called the Divine Power by which this was effected, a rebuke, unless indeed any one may choose to say, that the sea was secretly rebuked, so that the waters might hear, and yet men could not. The power by which God acteth is very abstruse and mysterious, a power by which he causeth that even things devoid of sense instantly obey at his will.—*Augustine.*

Verse 9.—"*Wilderness.*" *Midbar;* a broad expanse of poor dry land, suited for sheep-walks (like our South-Downs, or Salisbury Plain). Compare Isa. lxiii. 13.—*William Kay.*

Verse 11.—"*There was not one of them left.*" An emblem this of the utter destruction of all our spiritual enemies by Christ, who has not only saved us from them, but has entirely destroyed them; he has made an end of sin, even of all the sins of his people; he has spoiled Satan, and his principalities and powers; he has abolished death, the last enemy, and made his saints more than conquerors over all. Likewise it may be a representation of the destruction of the wicked at the last day, who will all be burnt up at the general conflagration, root and branch, not one will be left. See Mal. iv. 1.—*John Gill.*

Verse 12.—"*Then believed they his words.*" There is a temporary faith, as Mark calls it (iv. 17), which is not so much a fruit of the Spirit of regeneration, as of a certain mutable affection, and so it soon passeth away. It is not a voluntary faith which is here extolled by the prophet, but rather that which is the result of compulsion, namely, because men, whether they will or not, by a sense which they have of the power of God, are constrained to show some reverence for him. This passage ought to be well considered, that men, when once they have yielded submission to God, may not deceive themselves, but may know that the touchstone of faith is when they spontaneously receive the word of God, and constantly continue firm in their obedience to it.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 12.—Natural affections raised high in a profession of religion will withstand temptations for a fit, but wait till the stream runs lower, and you will see. What a fit of affection had the Israelites when their eyes had seen that miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea! What songs of rejoicing had they!

what resolves never to distrust him again! "*Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.*" Satan doth not presently urge them to murmuring and unbelief, though that was his design, but he staid till the fit was over, and then he could soon tempt them to "*forget his works.*"—*Richard Gilpin in "A Treatise of Satan's Temptations,"* 1677.

Verse 12.—In the very brevity of this verse, the only one of its kind in the narrative portion of the psalm, we may well see how shortlived were their gratitude, belief, and worship of God; as it follows at once, "*They soon forgat,*" etc.—*Neale and Littledale.*

Verses 12, 13.—"*They sang his praise. They soon forgat his works.*" This was said of that generation of the Israelites, which came out of Egypt. The chapter which contains the portion of their history here alluded to, begins with rapturous expressions of gratitude, and ends with the murmurs of discontent; both uttered by the same lips, within the short space of three days. Their expressions of gratitude were called forth by that wonderful display of the divine perfections, which delivered them from the host of Pharaoh, and destroyed their enemies. Their murmurs were excited by a comparatively trifling inconvenience, which in a few hours was removed. Of persons whose thanksgivings were so quickly, and so easily changed to murmurings, it might well be said, —though they *sang God's praises*, "*they soon forgat his works.*"

Unhappily, the Israelites are by no means the only persons of whom this may, in truth, be said. Their conduct, as here described, affords a striking exemplification of that spurious gratitude, which often bursts forth in a sudden flash, when dreaded evils are averted, or unexpected favours bestowed; but expires with the occasion that gave it birth; a gratitude resembling the joy excited in an infant's breast by the gift of some glittering toy, which is received with rapture, and pleases for an hour; but when the charm of novelty vanishes, is thrown aside with indifference; and the hand that bestowed it is forgotten. Springing from no higher principle than gratified self-love, it is neither acceptable to God, nor productive of obedience to his laws; nor does it in any respect really resemble that holy, heaven-born affection, whose language it often borrows, and whose name it assumes. It may be called, distinctively, the gratitude of sinners; who, as they love those that love them, will of course be grateful to those that are kind to them; grateful even to God when they view him as kind.

Of these instances, the first which I shall notice is furnished by the works of *creation;* or, as they are often, though not very properly, called, the works of nature. In so impressive a manner do these works present themselves to our senses; so much of variety, and beauty, and sublimity do they exhibit; such power, and wisdom, and goodness do they display; that perhaps no man, certainly no man who possesses the smallest share of sensibility, taste, or mental cultivation, can, at all times, view them without emotion; without feelings of awe, or wonder, or admiration, or delight.

But, alas, how transient, how unproductive of salutary effects, have all these emotions proved? Appetite and passion, though hushed for a moment, soon renewed their importunities; the glitter of wealth and distinction, and power, eclipsed, in our view, the glories of Jehovah; we sunk from that heaven toward which we seemed rising, to plunge afresh into the vortex of earthly pleasures and pursuits; we neglected and disobeyed him, whom we had been ready to adore; and continued to live without God, in a world which we had just seen to be full of his glory.

A second instance of a similar nature is afforded by the manner in which men are often affected by God's works of *providence.* In these works his perfections are so constantly, and often so clearly displayed; our dependence on them is at all times so real, and sometimes so apparent; and they bear, in many cases, so directly and evidently upon our dearest temporal interests, that even the most insensible cannot, always, regard them with indifference.

But the feeling is usually transient; and the acknowledgment is forgotten almost as soon as it is made.

In a similar manner are men often affected by God's works of *grace;* or those works whose design and tendency it is, to promote the spiritual and eternal interests of man. These works most clearly display, not only the natural, but the moral perfections of Jehovah. Here his character shines, full-orbed and complete.

That an exhibition of these wonders should make, at least, a temporary impression upon our minds, is no more than might naturally be expected. For a moment our hearts seem to be melted. We feel, and are ready to acknowledge, that God is good; that the Saviour is kind; that his love ought to be returned; that heaven is desirable! Like a class of hearers described by one great Teacher, we receive the word with joy; a joy not unmingled with something which resembles gratitude; and we sing, or feel as if we could with pleasure sing, God's praises. But we leave his house; the emotions there excited subside; like the earth, when partially softened by a wintry sun, our hearts soon regain their icy hardness; the wonders of divine grace are forgotten; and God has reason to say in sorrow and displeasure,—Your goodness is as the morning cloud; and as the early dew it goeth away.—*Condensed from a Sermon by Edward Payson*, 1783—1827.

Verse 13.—"*They soon forgat his works.*" They forgat, yea, "*soon*"; they made haste to forget, so the original is: "They made haste, they forgat." Like men that in sleep shake Death by the hand, but when they are awake they will not know him.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 13.—How may we know that we are rightly thankful? When we are careful to register God's mercy, 1 Chron. xvi. 4: "David appointed certain of the Levites, to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel." Physicians say the memory is the first thing that decays; it is true in spirituals: "*They soon forgat his works.*"—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 13.—"*They soon forgat.*" As it is with a sieve or boulter, the good corn and fine flour goes through, but the light chaff and coarse bran remains behind; or as a strainer, that the sweet liquor is strained out, but the dregs are left behind: or as a grate, that lets the pure water run away, but if there be any straws, sticks, mud, or filth, that it holds. Thus it is with most men's memories; by nature they are but, as it were, *pertusa dolia*, mere river tubs, especially in good things very treacherous, so that the vain conceits of men are apt to be held in, when divine instructions and gracious promises run through; trifles and toys, and worldly things, they are apt to remember, tenacious enough; but for spiritual things they leak out; like Israel, *they soon forget them.*—*William Gouge.*

Verse 13.—"*They soon forgat his works.*" Three days afterwards, at the waters of Marah (Exod. xv. 24).—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 13.—"*They waited not.*" The insatiable nature of our desires is astonishing, in that scarcely a single day is allowed to God to gratify them. For should he not immediately satisfy them, we at once become impatient, and are in danger of eventually falling into despair. This, then, was the fault of the people, that they did not cast all their cares upon God, did not calmly call upon him, nor wait patiently until he was pleased to answer their requests, but rushed forward with reckless precipitation, as if they would dictate to God what he was to do. And, therefore, to heighten the criminality of their rash course, he employs the term "*counsel*"; because men will neither allow God to be possessed of wisdom, nor do they deem it proper to depend upon his counsel, but are more provident than becomes them, and would rather rule God than allow themselves to be ruled by him according to his pleasure. That we may be preserved from provoking God, let us ever retain this principle, That it is our duty to let him provide for us such things as he knows will be for our advantage. And verily, faith divesting us of our own wisdom, enables us hopefully and

quietly to wait until God accomplishes his own work ; whereas, on the contrary, our carnal desire always goes before the counsel of God, by its too great haste.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 13.—"*They waited not.*" They ought to have thought, that so great works of God towards themselves were not without a purpose, but that they invited them to some endless happiness, which was to be waited for with patience ; but they hastened to make themselves happy with temporal things, which give no man true happiness, because they do not quench insatiable longing : "for whosoever," saith our Lord, "shall drink of this water, shall thirst again." John iv. 13.—*Augustine.*

Verse 13.—"*They waited not for his counsel.*"—Which neglect of theirs may be understood two ways. First, that they waited not for his open or declared counsel, to direct them what to do, but without asking his advice would needs venture and run on upon their own heads, to do what seemed good in their own eyes. Secondly, that they waited not for the accomplishment of his hidden and secret counsel concerning them ; they would not tarry God's time for the bringing forth and bringing about his counsels. Not to wait upon God either way is very sinful. Not to wait for his counsel to direct us what to do, and not to wait for his doing or fulfilling his own counsel, argues at once a proud and an impatient spirit ; in the one, men do even slight the wisdom of God, and in the other vainly presume and attempt to prevent his providence.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 13.—"*They waited not for his counsel.*" A believer acting his faith, hath great advantage of an unbeliever. An unbeliever is froward and passionate, and heady and hasty, when he is put to plunge ; *he waits not for the counsel of God.* He leaps before he looks, before he hath eyes to see his way ; but a believer is quiet and confident, and silent and patient, and prayerful, and standing upon his watch-tower, to see what God will answer at such a time.—*Matthew Lawrence, in "The Use and Practice of Faith,"* 1657.

Verse 14.—"*In the wilderness.*" When God by circumstances of time and place doth call for moderation of carnal appetite, the transgression is more heinous and offensive unto God : "They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness," where they should have contented themselves with any sort of provision.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 14.—"*In the wilderness.*" There, *where they had bread enough and to spare*, yet nothing would serve them but they must have flesh to eat. They were now *purely at God's finding ;* so that this was a reflection upon the wisdom and goodness of their Creator. They were now, in all probability, *within a step of Canaan*, yet had not patience to stay for dainties till they came thither. *They had flocks and herds of their own*, but they will not kill them ; God must give them flesh as he gave them bread, or they will never give him credit or their good word : they did not only wish for flesh, "but" they "lusted exceedingly" after it. A desire even of lawful things, when it is inordinate and violent, becomes sinful ; and therefore this is called "lusting after evil things," (1 Cor. x. 6,) though the quails as God's gift, were good things, and were so spoken of, Ps. cv. 40. Yet this was not all, "they tempted God in the desert," *where they had had such experience of his goodness and power*, and questioned whether he could and would gratify them therein. See Psalm lxxviii. 19, 20.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 15.—"*And he gave them their request,*" etc. The throat's pleasure did shut up paradise, sold the birthright, beheaded the Baptist, and it was the chief of the cooks, Nebuzaradan, that first set fire to the temple, and razed the city. These effects are, 1. Grossness ; which takes away agility to any good work ; which makes a man more like a tun upon two pottle pots. Cæsar said he mistrusted not Antony and Dolabella for any practices, because they were fat ; but Casca and Cassius, lean, hollow fellows, who did think too much. The other are the devil's crammed fowls, too fat to lay. Indeed, what need they travel

far, whose felicity is at home ; placing paradise in their throats, and heaven in their food ? 2. Macilency of grace ; for as it puts fatness into their bodies, so leanness into their souls. God fatted the Israelites with quails, but withal "*sent leanness into their soul.*" The flesh is blown up, the spirit doth languish. They are worse than man-eaters, for they are self-eaters : they put a pleurisy into their bloods, and an apoplexy into their souls.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 15.—"*Sent leanness into their soul.*" God affords us as great means for our increase in these Gospel times as ever he did ; he puts us into fat pastures, and well watered, Ps. xxiii ; therefore it is a shame for God's people not to grow, not to "bring forth twins," as Cant. vi. 6. They should grow twice as fast, bring forth twice as fast, bring forth twice as many lambs, twice as much wool, twice as much milk, as those that go upon bare commons. All the world may cry shame on such a man that is high fed, and often fed with fat and sweet ordinances, if he be still like Pharaoh's lean kine, as lean and ill-favoured as ever he was before. Certainly, fat ordinances and lean souls do not well agree. We are to look upon it as the greatest of judgments to have *leanness sent into our souls* while we are fed with *manna.* We look on it as an affliction to have an over-lean body ; but it's a far sadder condition to have a lean soul. Of the two, it were far better to have a well-thriving body and a lean soul : it is a great mercy when both prosper, 3 John 2 : "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Oh it is a sweet thing, especially to have a prospering soul, and still upon the growing hand : and God expects it should be so, where he affords good diet, great means of grace ; as Dan. i. 10 : "The prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink." If you should look ill, who fare so well, I should be sure to bear the blame ; it were so much as my head is worth. So certainly, where God affords precious food for precious souls, if these souls be lean under fat ordinances, either those that are fed, or those that feed them ; either the stewards or the household ; either minister, or people, or both, are sure to bear the blame. It is but equal and just that such should grow. We do not wonder to see lean sheep upon bare commons, but when we see sheep continue lean in fat pastures, we think their meat is ill bestowed on them ; and therefore let us strive to be on the growing hand.—*Matthew Lawrence.*

Verse 15.—"*Leanness*" is rendered "loathing" by Bishop Horsley, which accords with the literal state of the case ; but I think *leanness*, as applied to the soul is exceedingly descriptive of its spiritual barrenness and emptiness of aught like Divine tastes or enjoyments.—*Thomas Chalmers.*

Verse 17.—"*The earth opened,*" etc. This element was not used to such morsels. It devours the carcases of men ; but bodies informed with living souls, never before. To have seen them struck dead upon the earth had been fearful ; but to see the earth at once their executioner and grave, was more horrible. Neither the sea nor the earth are fit to give passage ; the sea is moist and flowing, and will not be divided, for the continuity of it ; the earth is dry and massy, and will neither yield naturally, nor meet again when it hath yielded : yet the waters did cleave to give way unto Israel for their preservation ; the earth did cleave to give way to the conspirators in judgment ; both sea and earth did shut their jaws again upon the adversaries of God. There was more wonder in this latter. It was a marvel that the waters opened ; it was no wonder that they shut again ; for the retiring and flowing was natural. It was no less marvel that the earth opened ; but more marvel that it shut again ; because it had no natural disposition to meet when it was divided. Now might Israel see they had to do with a God that could revenge with ease.

There are two sorts of traitors : the earth swallowed up the one, the fire the other. All the elements agree to serve the vengeance of their Maker. Nadab and Abihu brought fit persons, but unfit fire, to God ; these Levites bring the right fire, but unwarranted persons, before him : fire from God consumes both.

It is a dangerous thing to usurp sacred functions. The ministry will not grace the man; the man may disgrace the ministry.—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 17.—Dathan and Abiram only are mentioned, and this in strict agreement with Numb. xxvi. 11, where it is said, "*the children of Korah* died not." And the same thing is at least *implied* in Numb. xvi. 27, where it is said, that, just before the catastrophe took place, "Dathan and Abiram" (there is no mention of Korah) "came out and stood in the door of their tents." See this noticed and accounted for in Blunt's *Veracity of the Books of Moses*, Part I. § 20, p. 86.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 19.—"*They made a calf.*" And why a calf? Could they find no fitter resemblance of God amongst all the creatures? Why not rather the lordly lion, to show the sovereignty; vast elephant, the immensity; subtle serpent, the wisdom; long-lived hart, the eternity; swift eagle, the ubiquity of God, rather than the silly senseless calf, that eateth hay? But the shape mattereth not much, for if God be made like anything, he may be made like anything, it being as unlawful to fashion him an angel as a worm, seeing the commandment forbids as well the likeness of things in heaven above as in earth beneath (Exod. xx. 4). But probably a calf was preferred before other forms because they had learned it from the Egyptians' worshipping their ox Apis. Thus the Israelites borrowed (Exod. xii. 35) not all gold and silver, but some dross from the Egyptians, whence they fetch the idolatrous forms of their worship.

Verse 19.—The modern Jews are of opinion that all the afflictions which ever since have, do, or shall befall their nation, are still the just punishments on them for this their first act of idolatry. And the rabbins have a saying that God never inflicts any judgment upon them, but there is an ounce of his anger on them for their ancestors' making the golden calf. A reverend friend of mine, conversing at Amsterdam with a Jewish youth (very capable and ingenious for one of that nation) endeavoured to make him sensible of God's anger upon them for rejecting and crucifying of Christ, for which foul act he showed how the Jews have lived many hundred years in miserable banishment. But the youth would in no wise acknowledge in their sufferings any effect or punishment of their murdering of Christ, but taking his Bible turned to God's threatening immediately after their making of the calf (Exod. xxxiii. 34): "Nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them," so interpreting and applying all the numerous calamities which since have befallen them to relate to no other cause than that their first idolatry. Whereas, indeed, the arrears of their idolatry long ago were satisfied, and this is a new debt of later date contracted on themselves by their infidelity.—*Thomas Fuller*, 1608—1661, *in* "*A Pisgah Sight of Palestine.*"

Verse 19. "*They made a calf,*" etc. This people had seen this idolatrous service in Egypt; and now they did not more long after Egyptian food, than after this Egyptian god. . . . It is an easy matter for men to be drawn to the practice of that idolatry that they have been accustomed to see practised in those places that they have a long time lived in. He that would take heed of idolatry, let him take heed of Egypt; the very air of Egypt (as I may so say) is infectious in this kind. See here, they had seen the worship of a young bullock in Egypt, and they must have a bullock. . . . .

The local seat of Antichrist (and what seat can that be but *Rome?*) is called in the Revelation by three names: it is called *Egypt*, Rev. ii. 8. It is called *Sodom* in the same verse. It is called *Babylon* in many places of the Revelation. It is called *Babylon*, in regard of her cruelty. It is called *Sodom*, in regard to her filthiness; and *Egypt*, in regard of her *idolatry.*

It is a hard matter for a man to live in Egypt, and not to taste and savour somewhat of the idolatry of Egypt. We had sometime, in England, a proverb about going to Rome. They said, a man that went the first time to Rome, he went to see a wicked man there; he that went the second time to Rome, went to be acquainted with that wicked man there; he that went the third time,

brought him home with him. How many have we seen (and it is pity to see so many of our nobility and gentry go to those *Egyptian* parts, and return home again; but few of them bring home the same manners, the same religion, nor the same souls they carried out with them.—*Thomas Westfield, Bishop of Bristow, in "England's Face in Israel's Glasse,"* 1658.

Verse 19.—"*In Horeb.*" There is a peculiar stress on the words "*in Horeb,*" as denoting the very place where the great manifestation of God's power and presence has been made, and where the law had been given, whose very first words were a prohibition of the sin of idolatry.—*Agellius, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verses 19, 20.—Apis, or Serapis, was a true living black bull, with a white list or streak along the back, a white mark in fashion of an half-moon on his right shoulder, only two hairs growing on his tail (why just so many and no more, the devil knows), with a fair square blaze on his forehead, and a great bunch called cantharus under his tongue. What art their priests did use to keep up the breed and preserve succession of cattle with such *χαρίσματα*, or privy marks, I list not to inquire. . . . . Besides this natural and living bull, kept in one place, they also worshipped *βοῦν διαχρυσον*, a golden or gilded ox, the image or portraiture of the former. Some conceive this Apis to have been the symbol and emblem of Joseph the patriarch, so called from אַב, *ab*, a father, seeing he is said to be made by God a father to Pharaoh (Gen. xlv. 8), that is, preserver of him and his country; and therefore the Egyptians, in after ages, gratified his memory with statues of an ox, a creature so useful in ploughing, sowing, bringing home, and treading out of corn, to perpetuate that gift of grain he had conferred upon them. They strengthen their conjecture because Serapis (which one will have to be nothing else but Apis with addition of שַׂר, *sar*, that is, a prince, whence perchance our English Sir) was pictured with a bushel over his head, and Joseph (we know) was corn-meter-general in Egypt. Though others, on good ground, conceive ox-worship in Egypt of far greater antiquity.

However, hence Aaron (Exod. xxxii. 4), and hence afterwards Jeroboam (who flying from Solomon, lived some years with Shishak, king of Egypt, 1 Kings xi. 40) had the pattern of their calves, which they made for the children of Israel to worship. If any object the Egyptians' idols were bulls or oxen, the Israelites' but calves, the difference is not considerable; for (besides the objector never looked into the mouths of the latter to know their age) *gradus non variat speciem*, a less character is not another letter. Yea, Herodotus calls Apis himself *μόσχος*, a calf, and Vitulus is of as large acceptation among the Latins. Such an old calf the poet describes—

> *Ego hanc vitalem (ne forte recuses*
> *Bis venit ad mulctram binos alit ubere fœtus)*
> *Depono.*
>
> My calf I lay (lest you mistake't both tides
> She comes to th' pail and suckles twain besides).

But to put all out of doubt, what in Exodus is termed a calf, the psalmist calleth an ox (Ps. cvi. 20).—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verses 19—22.—It is to be hoped, we shall never live to see a time, when the miracles of *our* redemption shall be forgotten; when the return of Jesus Christ from heaven shall be despaired of; and when the people shall solicit their teachers to fabricate a new philosophical deity, for them to worship, instead of the God of their ancestors, to whom glory hath been ascribed from generation to generation.—*George Horne.*

Verse 20.—"*An ox that eateth grass.*" The Egyptians, when they consulted Apis, presented a bottle of hay or of grass, and if the ox received it, they expected good success.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 20.—Although some of the Rabbins would excuse this gross idolatry

of their forefathers, yet others more wise bewail them, and say that there is an ounce of this golden calf in all their present sufferings.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 21.—"*They forgat God.*" To devise images and pictures to put us in the mind of God, is a very forgetting both of God's nature and of his authority, which prohibits such devices, for so doth the Lord expound it: "*They forgat God their saviour.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 21.—Let us observe in this place that Israel is now for the third time accused of forgetting God; above in ver. 7, afterwards in ver. 13, and now in ver. 21. And that he might shew the greatness of this forgetfulness he does not simply say they forgat God, but adds, *their Saviour:* not the Saviour of their fathers in former times, but *their own Saviour.*—*Musculus.*

Verse 22.—"*Land of Ham.*" Egypt is called the land of *Ham*, or rather *Cham*, חָם, because it was peopled by Mizraim, the son of Ham, and grandson of Noah. Plutarch (De Iside and Osiride) informs us, that the Egyptians called their country Χημια, *Chemia;* and the Copts give it the name of Χημι, *Chemi*, to the present day.—*Comprehensive Bible.*

Verse 23.—"*Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach.*" Moses stood in the gap, and diverted the wrath of God; the hedge of religion and worship was broken down by a golden calf, and he made it up: Numb. xvi. 41, 42, the people murmured, rose up against Moses and Aaron, trod down the hedge of authority, whereupon the plague brake in upon them; presently Aaron steps into the gap, makes up the hedge, and stops the plague, ver. 47, 48. That which they did was honourable; and they were repairers of breaches. We, through infinite mercy, have had some like Moses and Aaron, to make up our hedges, raise up our foundations, and stop some gaps; but all our gaps are not yet stopped. Are there not gaps in the hedge of doctrine? If it were not so, how came in such erroneous, blasphemous, and wild opinions amongst us? Are there not gaps in the hedges of civil and ecclesiastical authority? Do not multitudes trample upon magistracy and ministry, all powers, both human and divine? Are there not gaps in the worship of God? Do not too many tread down all churches, all ordinances, yea, the very Scriptures? Are there not gaps in the hedge of justice, through which the bulls of Bashan enter, which oppress the poor, and crush the needy? Amos iv. 1: are there not gaps in the hedge of love; is not that bond of perfection broken? Are there not bitter envyings and strife amongst us; do we not bite and devour one another? are there not gaps in the hedge of conscience? is not the peace broken between God and your souls? doth not Satan come in oft at the gap, and disturb you? are there not gaps also in your several relations, whereby he gets advantage? Surely, if our eyes be in our heads, we may see gaps enough.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 23.—"*The breach.*" This is a metaphor taken from a city which is besieged, and in the walls of which the enemy having made a "*breach*" is just entering in, to destroy it, unless he be driven back by some valiant warrior. Thus *Moses* stood, as it were "*in the breach,*" and averted the wrath of God, when he was just going to destroy the Israelites. See Exod. xxxii.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 23.—If Christians could be brought to entertain a just sense of the value and power of intercessory prayer, surely it would abound. It is a terrible reproof against the lying prophets of Ezekiel's time: "Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord" (Ezek. xiii. 5). Compare Ex. xxxii. 9—14.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 24.—"*Yea, they despised.*" When the promised inheritance of heaven (which was figured by the pleasant *land of promise*), is not counted worthy of all

the pains and difficulties which can be sustained and met with in the way of going toward it; the promised inheritance is but little esteemed of, as appeareth in the Israelites, who for love of ease, and fear of the Canaanites, were ready to turn back to Egypt: "*They despised the pleasant land.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 24.—"*They despised the pleasant land.*" This was a type of heaven, the good land afar off; the better country, the land of promise and rest; in which is fulness of provisions, and where there will be no hunger and thirst; where flows the river of the water of life, and stands the tree of life, bearing all manner of fruits; where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore; the most delightful company of Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and glorified saints, and nothing to disturb their peace and pleasure neither from within nor from without. And yet this pleasant land may be said to be despised by such who do not care to go through any difficulty to it; to perform the duties of religion; to bear reproach for God's sake; to go through tribulation; to walk in the narrow and afflicted way which leads unto it; and by all such who do not care to part with their sinful lusts and pleasures; but prefer them and the things of this world to the heavenly state.—*John Gill.*

Verse 24.—One great bar to salvation is spiritual sloth. It is said of Israel, "*They despised the pleasant land.*" What should be the reason? Canaan was a paradise of delight, a type of heaven; aye, but they thought it would cost them a great deal of trouble and hazard in the getting, and they would rather go without it, they despised the pleasant land. Are there not millions of us who would rather go sleeping to hell, than sweating to heaven? I have read of certain Spaniards that live near where there is great store of fish, yet are so lazy that they will not be at the pains to catch them, but buy of their neighbours: such a sinful stupidity and sloth is upon the most, that though Christ be near them, though salvation is offered in the Gospel, yet they will not work out salvation.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verses 24, 25.—Murmuring hath in it much unbelief and distrust of God. "*They believed not his word; but murmured in their tents.*" They could not believe that the wilderness was the way to Canaan, that God would provide and furnish a table for them there, and relieve them in all their straits. So it is with us in trouble. We quarrel with God's providence, because we do not believe his promises; we do not believe that this can be consistent with love, or can work for good in the end.—*John Willison,* 1680—1750.

Verse 25.—"*But murmured.*" Murmuring! It must have been a malady characteristic of the Hebrew people, or a disease peculiar to that desert. As we proceed with this narrative we are constantly meeting it, creaking along in discord harsh and chronic, or amazing earth and heaven by its shrill ear-piercing paroxysms. They lift up their eyes, and as the Egyptians pursue, the people murmur. They come to a fountain, the water is bitter, and once more they murmur. Then no bread; murmurings redoubled. Moses is no longer in the Mount; murmurs. He takes too much upon him; more murmurs. When shall we reach that promised land?—murmurs' extraordinary, loud murmurs. We are close to the land, but its inhabitants are giants, and their towns walled up to heaven. Oh, what a take-in! and the last breath of the last survivors of that querulous race goes forth in a hurricane of reproach and remonstrance — a perfect storm of murmurs.—*James Hamilton* (1814—1867) *in* "*Moses the man of God.*"

Verse 25.—The murmuring on this occasion seems to have been a social evil, they *murmured in their tents.* So do men in social life promote among each other prejudice and aversion to true religion.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 28.—"*They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor,*"—rather "bound themselves with his badge": for it was the custom in ancient times, as it is now, in all Pagan countries, for every idol to have some specific badge, or

ensign, by which his votaries are known.—*John Kitto, in "Daily Bible Illustrations."*

Verse 28.—"*They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor.*" The narrative (Num. xxv.) seems clearly to show that this form of Baal-worship was connected with licentious rites. Without laying too much stress on the Rabbinical derivation of the word פְּעוֹר, *hiatus, i.e.*, "*aperire hymenem virgineum,*" we seem to have reason to conclude that this was the nature of the worship. Baal-Peor was identified by the Rabbins and early fathers with Priapus (see the authorities quoted by Selden, *De Diis Syris*, i. 4, p. 302, sq., who, however, dissents from this view.) This is, moreover, the view of Creuzer (ii. 411), Winer, Gesenius, Fürst, and almost all critics. The reader is referred for more detailed information particularly to Creuzer's *Symbolik* and Movers' *Phönizier.* —*William Gotch, in "Smith's Dictionary of the Bible."*

Verse 28.—"*Ate the sacrifices.*" It was usual for the officers to eat the chief part of the sacrifice. Hence the remarks of Paul on this subject, 1 Cor. viii., 1—13.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 28.—"*The dead.*" The word מֵתִים, *maithim*, signifies *dead men;* for the idols of the heathen were generally *men*,—warriors, kings, or lawgivers,—who had been deified after their death; though many of them had been execrated during their life.—*Comprehensive Bible.*

Verse 28.—"*And they ate the sacrifices of the dead.*"

> His obsequies to Polydorus paying
> A tomb we raise, and altars to the dead
> With dark blue fillets and black cypress bind
> Our dames with hair dishevell'd stand to mourn;
> Warm frothy bowls of milk and sacred blood
> We offer, in his grave the spirit lay,
> Call him aloud, and bid our last farewell. —*Virgil.*

Verse 29.—"*They provoked him to anger with their inventions.*" Note, that it is not said, *with their deeds*, but with their pursuits (*studies*). It is one thing simply to do a thing; it is quite another to pursue it earnestly night and day. The first may take place by chance, or through ignorance, or on account of some temptation, or violence, and that without the consent and against the inclination of the mind. But the latter is brought about in pursuance of a fixed purpose and design and by effort and forethought. We see, therefore, in this passage that the patience of God was at length provoked to anger and fury when the people sinned not merely once and again, but when the pursuit of sin grew and strengthened.—*Musculus.*

Verse 29.—"*Their inventions.*" *Their sins* are here called by the name of "*their inventions.*" And so, sure, they are; as no ways taught us by God, but of our own imagining or finding out. For, indeed, our inventions are the cause of all sins. And if we look well into it we shall find our inventions are so. By God's injunction we should all live, and his injunction is, "You shall not do every man what seems good in his own eyes" (or finds out in his own brains), but "whatsoever I command you, that shall you do." Deut. xii. 8. But we, setting light by that charge of his, out of the old disease of our father Adam ("ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"), think it a goodly matter to be witty, and to find out things ourselves to make to ourselves, to be authors, and inventors of somewhat, that so we may seem to be as wise as *God*, if not wiser; and to know what is for our turns, as well as he, if not better. It was Saul's fault. God bade him destroy Amalek altogether, and he would invent a better way, to save some (forsooth) for sacrifice, which God could not think of. And it was St. Peter's fault, when he persuaded Christ from his passion, and found out a better way (as he thought) than Christ could devise.—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 29.—"*Brake in upon them.*" The image is that of a river which has burst its barriers; see Exod. xix. 24. The plague is the slaughter inflicted

upon the people by command of Moses; Numb. xxv. 4, 5, 8, 9, 18.—"*The Speaker's Commentary.*"

Verse 30.—"*Then stood up Phinehas.*" All Israel saw the bold lewdness of Zimri, but their hearts and eyes were so full of grief, that they had not room enough for indignation. Phinehas looked on with the rest, but with other affections. When he saw this defiance bidden to God, and this insultation upon the sorrow of his people (that while they were wringing their hands, a proud miscreant durst outface their humiliation with his wicked dalliance), his heart boils with a desire of a holy revenge; and now that hand, which was used to a censer and sacrificing knife, takes up his javelin, and, with one stroke, joins these two bodies in their death, which were joined in their sin, and in the very flagrance of their lust, makes a new way for their souls to their own place. O noble and heroical courage of Phinehas! which, as it was rewarded of God, so is worthy to be admired of men. He doth not stand casting of scruples: Who am I to do this? The son of the high priest. My place is all for peace and mercy: it is for me to sacrifice, and pray for the sin of the people, not to sacrifice any of the people for their sin. My duty calls me to appease the anger of God what I may, not to revenge the sins of men; to pray for their conversion, not to work the confusion of any sinner. And who are these? Is not the one a great prince in Israel, the other a princess of Midian? Can the death of two so famous personages go unrevenged? Or, if it be safe and fit, why doth my uncle Moses rather shed his own tears than their blood? I will mourn with the rest; let them revenge whom it concerneth. But the zeal of God hath barred out all weak deliberations; and he holds it now both his duty and his glory, to be an executioner of so shameless a pair of offenders. . . . .

Now the sin is punished, the plague ceaseth. The revenge of God sets out ever after the sin; but if the revenge of men (which commonly comes later) can overtake it, God gives over the chase. How oft hath the infliction of a less punishment avoided a greater! There are none so good friends to the state, as courageous and impartial ministers of justice: these are the reconcilers of God and the people, more than the prayers of them that sit still and do nothing.—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 30.—"*Then stood up Phinehas,*" etc. Mark the mighty principle, which rolled like a torrent in the heart of Phinehas. The Spirit leaves it not obscure. The praise is this, "He was zealous for his God," Numb. xxv. 13. He could not fold his arms, and see God's law insulted, his rule defied, his majesty and empire scorned. The servant's heart blazed in one blaze of godly indignation. He must be up to vindicate his Lord. His fervent love, his bold resolve, fear nothing in a righteous cause. The offending Zimri was a potent prince: nevertheless he spared him not.

Believer, can you read this and feel no shame? Do your bold efforts testify your zeal? Sinners blaspheme God's name. Do you rebuke? His Sabbaths are profaned. Do you protest? False principles are current? Do you expose the counterfeits? Vice stalks in virtue's garb. Do you tear down the mask? Satan enthrals the world. Do you resist? Nay, rather are you not dozing unconcerned? Whether Christ's cause succeeds, or be cast down, you little care. If righteous zeal girded your loins, and braced your nerves, and moved the rudder of your heart, and swelled your sails of action, would God be so unknown, and blasphemy so daring?

Mark, next, the zeal of Phinehas is sound-minded. It is not as a courser without rein, a torrent unembanked, a hurricane let loose. Its steps are set in order's path. It executes God's own will in God's own way. The mandate says, let the offenders die. He aims a death-blow, then, with obedient hand. The zeal, which heaven kindles, is always a submissive grace.—*Henry Law, in "Christ is All,"* 1858.

Verse 30.—"*Stood up,*" as valiantly to do his work of zeal, as Moses had

done to discharge the office of intercessor, and because he alone rose to set the example of resistance to the foul rites of Baal-Peor.—*Cassiodorus, quoted by Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 30.—"*So the plague was stayed.*" God himself puts this peculiar honour of staying the plague (when he was about to destroy the whole camp) upon this fact of Phinehas, saying, "He hath turned away my wrath." Num. xxv. 10, 11, because he was acted with the same zeal for God's glory and Israel's good, as God himself is acted with for them, and feared not to lose his life in God's cause, by putting to death a prince and a princess in the very flagrancy of their lust at one blow. There is such an accent and such an emphasis put by the Lord on this act, (as the Jewish Rabbis observe), that here they begin the forty-first section or lecture of the Law, or (as Vatablus saith) the seventh section of the book, which they call Phinehas. Moreover, it teacheth us, that zeal of justice in the cause of God is an hopeful means to remove God's wrath from, and to procure his mercy to, man. Thus David also made an atonement by doing justice on Saul's house, 2 Sam. xxi. 3, etc. . . . .

Phinehas by virtue of this promise of the priesthood (Num. xxv. 12, 13) lived himself to a great old age, even (as some say) to three hundred years, as appeareth by Judg. xx. 28, where he then is found alive, for his zeal at this time. He lived so long that some of the Rabbis are of opinion that he died not at all, but is still alive, whom they suppose to be the Elias that is to come before the coming of Christ; but this notion is confuted by others of their Rabbis, and by the mention of his seed succeeding him in sacred Scripture. However, though few after the Flood did near attain to any such age, yet must Phinehas be very old in that time of Israel's warring with Benjamin. . . . . Phinehas's priesthood is called "everlasting," not in his person, but in his posterity, whose sons were successively high priests till the captivity of Babylon, 1 Chron. vi. 4—16; and at the return out of captivity, Ezra, the great priest and scribe, was of his line, Ezra vii. 1—6; and so it continued in that line until, or very near, the approach of our evangelical High Priest (as Christ is called, Heb. v. 6), who was of the order of Melchizedek.—*Christopher Ness.*

Verse 30.—Why is the pacifying of God's wrath, and the staying of the plague ascribed to Phinehas, having a blush of irregularity in it, rather than to the acts of Moses and the judges, which were by express command from God and very regular? For answer, the acts of Moses and the judges *slaked the fire* of God's wrath, that of Phinehas *quenched* it; again, the acts of Moses and the judges had a rise from a *spark*, that of Phinehas from a *flame of zeal* and holy indignation in him; hence the Lord, who is exceedingly taken with the springs and roots of actions, sets the crown upon the head of Phinehas.—*Edmund Staunton, in a Sermon preached before the House of Lords,* 1644.

Verse 30.—"*So the plague was stayed.*" A man doth not so live by his own faith, but in *temporal respects* the faith of another man may do him good. Masters by their faith obtained healing for their servants, parents for their children, Matt. xv. 28. "Oh, man, great is thy faith!" "Jesus seeing their faith," healed the sick of the palsy. God's people for the town or place where they live: "The innocent" (*i.e.*, the faithful doer) "shall deliver the island," Job xxii. 30. Gen. xviii. 32, "If ten righteous persons shall be found there, I will not destroy it for ten's sake." Especially in Magistrates, *Moses*, Numb. xiv.; *Hezekiah*, Isai. xxxvii., put up prayers, and God saved the people and places, they prayed for: "*Then Phinehas executed judgment* (appeased God by faith) *and so the plague was stayed.*"—*Matthew Lawrence.*

Verse 32.—"*It went ill with Moses.*" This judgment of God on that sin did not imply that he had blotted Moses out of the book of life, or the number of the saints, or otherwise than forgive his sin. For he continued still to talk with him, and advise with him of the governing of his people, and spake to Joshua that he should be faithful to him as his servant Moses. That was not the true Canaan from which he was shut out, but only the figure and shadow; and that

he was allowed to see; a vision well worthy of all his labours, for the more excellent things signified by it.—*Isaac Williams, in "The Characters of the Old Testament,"* 1873.

Verse 33.—"*They provoked his spirit.*" As Abraham was distinguished for his faith, so was Moses for his meekness; for Scripture has declared that he was "very meek, above all the men which were on the face of the earth," Numb. xii. 3. Yet, judging from facts recorded of him, we should be inclined to suppose that he was by nature remarkable for sensitiveness and hastiness of temper—that was his one besetting infirmity. Such appears to have been evinced when he slew the Egyptian; when he twice smote the rock in the wilderness; and on that occasion when he was "punished," as the psalmist says, "*because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips,*" and when he broke the two tables of stone. Something of the same kind appears to have been the case with our own Hooker, whose biographer attributes to him such singular meekness, while his private writings indicate a temper keenly alive and sensitive to the sense of wrong.—*Isaac Williams.*

Verse 33.—"*They provoked his spirit.*"—In a dispensation itself mainly gracious, and foreshadowing one which would be grace altogether, it was of prime importance that the mediating men should be merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and slow to anger. And such they were in marvellous manner. . . . .

Brimming over with instruction as is this passage, we must leave it with a few remarks.

1. How careful preachers of the gospel and expounders of Scripture should be not to give an erroneous impression of God's mind or message. The mental acumen is rare, but the right spirit is rarer. But what is the right spirit?—A loving spirit, a gentle spirit, a faithful spirit, a meek and weaned spirit, a spirit which says, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," and a spirit which adds, "All that the Lord giveth me, that will I speak," that excellent spirit which is only imparted by the good Spirit of God. For if He withdraw, even a Moses ceases to be meek, and ceasing to be meek, even a Moses becomes a bad divine and an erroneous teacher, striking the rock that has been already stricken once for all, and preaching glad tidings gruffly. He who gives the living water does not grudge it; but sometimes, instead of "Ho! every one that thirsteth," the preacher says, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" and makes the very invitation repulsive.

2. When any one has run long and run well, how sad it is to stumble within a few steps of the goal! If Moses had an earthly wish, it was to see Israel safe in their inheritance, and his wish was all but consummated. Faith and patience had held out well nigh forty years, and in a few months more the Jordan would be crossed and the work would be finished. And who can tell but this very nearness of the prize helped to create something of a presumptuous confidence? The blood of Moses was hot to begin with, and he was not the meekest of men when he smote the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. But he had got a good lesson in ruling his spirit, and betwixt the long sojourn with Jethro and the self-discipline needful in the charge of this multitude, he might fancy that he had now his foot on the neck of this enemy: when lo! the sin revives and Moses dies.

Blessed is the man that feareth alway! Blessed is the man who, although years have passed without an attempt at burglary, still bars his doors and sees his windows fastened! Blessed is the man who, although a generation has gone since the last eruption, forbears to build on the volcanic soil, and dreads fires which have smouldered for fourscore years! Blessed is the man who, even when the high seas are crossed and the land is made, still keeps an outlook! Blessed is the man who, even on the confines of Canaan, takes heed of the evil heart, lest, with a promise of entering in, he should come short through unbelief!

3. Elevation of mind and sweetness of spirit are pearls of great price, and if we wish to preserve them we had better intrust them to God's own keeping. If Moses lost his faith, it was by first losing self-command: and if a man lose this, it is hard to say what next he may lose: like the mad warrior who makes a missile of his shield and hurls it at the head of an enemy, he is henceforward open to every fiery dart, to the cut and thrust of every assailant. But, as John Newton remarks, "The grace of God is as necessary to create a right temper in a Christian on the breaking of a china plate as on the death of an only son;" and as no man can tell on any dawning day but what that may be the most trying day in all his life, how wise to pray without ceasing, "uphold me according unto thy word. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips." "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."—*James Hamilton.*

Verse 33.—"*They provoked his spirit,*" etc. Angry he certainly was; and when, reverting to a former miracle, the Most High directed him to take the wonder-staff—his rod of many miracles—and at the head of the congregation "speak to the rock," and it would "give forth its water," in the heat and agitation of his spirit he failed to implement implicitly the Divine command. Instead of speaking to the rock he spoke to the people, and his harangue was no longer in the language calm and dignified of the lawgiver, but had a certain tone of petulance and egotism. "Hear now, ye rebels, must we—must I and Aaron, not must Jehovah—fetch you water out of this rock?" And instead of simply *speaking* to it, he raised the rod and dealt it two successive strokes, just as if the rock were sharing the general perversity, and would no more than the people obey its Creator's bidding. He was angry, and he sinned. He sinned and was severely punished. Water flowed sufficient for the whole camp and the cattle, clear, cool, and eagerly gushing, enough for all the million; but at the same moment that its unmerited bounty burst on you, ye rebels, "a cup of wrath was put into the hand of Moses."* To you, ye murmurers, there came forth living water; to your venerable leaders the cup of God's anger.

"The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Numb. xx. 12.—*James Hamilton.*

Verse 33.—"*He spake unadvisedly with his lips.*" The Lord desires him to address the rock, but Moses speaks to Israel. God wishes him to speak a word to the inanimate stone, and Moses strikes it twice. God still is willing that the people shall remain as his inheritance, but Moses evidently treats them with ill-will and much offensiveness. God wishes to relieve, and give refreshing to the people in their thirst, and Moses is selected to co-operate with him in all such joy; but mark how, on this very day, a deep discord between God's inclination and the mind of Moses shows itself. God is inclined to grant forgiveness,—Moses inclines to punishment; before, the very opposite seemed to prevail. God is forbearing,—Moses, filled with bitterness; God seeks to glorify his grace,—with Moses, self, not God, comes into prominence. "Must we,"—not, "must the Lord,"—but "must we fetch you water out of this rock?" We see now, in this prophet, strong at other times, the first plain indications of decay and weariness. He has grown tired (and truly it should not seem strange, for which of us could have sustained a struggle such as his for half the time?) of carrying these stubborn children any longer now. This man, so truly great, has never for an instant hitherto forgotten his own dignity in presence of all Israel; but now, he is no longer master of himself.—*J. J. Van Oosterzee.*

Verse 33.—"*He spake unadvisedly.*" A gracious person may be surprised and

* Van Oosterzee.

fall suddenly among thieves that lurk behind the bushes. Nay, very holy men, unless wonderful wary, may be quickly tript up by sudden questions and unexpected emergencies. Who knows the subtilty of sin, and the deceitfulness of his own heart? Take heed of answering quickly, and send up sudden ejaculations to heaven before you reply to a weighty and doubtful motion.—*Samuel Lee.*

Verses 34—38.—The miracles and mercies which settled them in Canaan made no more deep and durable impressions upon them than those that fetched them out of Egypt; for by that time they were well warm in Canaan; they corrupted themselves, and forsook God. Observe the steps of their apostacy.

1. They spared the nations which God had doomed to destruction (ver. 34). When they had got the good land God had promised them, they had no zeal against the wicked inhabitants, whom the Lord commanded them to extirpate, pretending pity; but so merciful is God, that no man needs to be in any case more compassionate than he.

2. When they spared them, they promised themselves, that for all this, they would not join in any dangerous affinity with them; but the way of sin is down-hill; omissions make way for commissions; when they neglect to destroy the heathen, the next news we hear is, they "*were mingled among the heathen,*" made leagues with them, and contracted an intimacy with them, so that they "*learned their works*" (ver. 35). That which is rotten will sooner corrupt that which is sound, than be cured or made sound by it.

3. When they mingled with them, and learned some of their works that seemed innocent diversions and entertainments, yet they thought they would never join with them in their worship; but by degrees they learned that too (ver. 36). "*They served their idols*" in the same manner, and with the same rites that they served them; and they became a snare unto them, that sin drew on many more, and brought the judgments of God upon them, which they themselves could not but be sensible of, and yet knew not how to recover themselves.

4. When they joined with them in some of their idolatrous services, which they thought had least harm in them, they little thought that ever they should be guilty of that barbarous and inhuman piece of idolatry, the sacrificing of their living children to their dead gods: but they came to that at last (verses 37, 38) in which Satan triumphed over his worshippers, and regaled himself in blood and slaughter. "*They sacrificed their sons and daughters,*" pieces of themselves "*to devils;*" and added murder, the most unnatural murder, to their idolatry; one cannot think of it without horror; they "*shed innocent blood,*" the most innocent, for it was infant blood, nay, it was the "*blood of their sons and their daughters.*" See the power of the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, and see his malice. The beginning of idolatry and superstition, like that of strife, is as the letting forth of water, and there is no villainy which they that venture upon it can be sure they shall stop short of, for God justly "gives them up to a reprobate mind" (Rom. i. 28). —*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 37.—"*Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.*" We need no better argument to discover the nature of these gods than this very service in my text accepted of them: for both by the record of sacred writ, and relation of heathen authors and other writers, we know that nothing was so usually commanded nor gratefully accepted by these heathenish gods, as was the shedding of man's blood, and the sacrificing of men, maids, and children unto them, as appears by the usual practice of men in former times. From the testimonies of Scripture, I give only the example of the king of Moab, mentioned in 2 Kings iii. 27, where it is said, that, being in some straits, "He took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall."

The stories likewise of the heathen are full of like examples. When the oracle of Apollo was asked by the Athenians how they might make amends for their killing of Androgeus, it willed them to send yearly to king Minos seven bodies of each sex to appease the wrath of god. Now this kind of yearly sacrifice continued still in Athens in the time of Socrates. Thus the Carthaginians, being vanquished by Agathocles, king of Sicily, and supposing their god to be displeased, to appease him did sacrifice two hundred noble men's children. This custom was ancient even before the Trojan war, for then was Iphigenia sacrificed. Thus we read that the Latins sacrificed the tenth of their children to Jupiter; that men and children were usually sacrificed to Saturn in many places in Candia, Rhodomene, Phœnice, Africa, and those commonly the choice and dearest of their children and most nobly descended. The manner of sacrificing their children to Saturn, Diodorus relates to be this: bringing their children to the statue or image of Saturn, which was of huge greatness, they gave them into his hands, which were made so hollow and winding that the children offered slipped and fell down through into a cave and furnace of fire. These sacrifices continued in use till the birth and death of our Saviour Christ, who came to destroy the work of the devil; for such sacrifices were first forbidden by Augustus Cæsar; after more generally by Tiberius (in whose reign our Saviour suffered) who, as Tertullian writes, so straitly forbade them, that he crucified the priests who offered them: howbeit, even in Tertullian's time, and after in Eusebius' and Lactantius' times, such sacrifices were offered (but closely) to Jupiter Latialis.

Who can now doubt, seeing such exceeding superstitious cruelty, but that the gods commanding such sacrifices were very devils and enemies to mankind? God commands no such thing, but forbids it, and threatens plagues to his people, because they had forsaken him and "built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, not spake it, neither came it into my mind" (Jer. xix. 5). Most infallibly then we may conclude that none but Satan, that arch-devil, with his angels, were the commanders of such service, for this agrees right well with his nature, who hath been a murderer from the beginning.—*Robert Jenison, in "The Height of Israel's Heathenish Idolatrie, in Sacrificing their Children to the Devill,"* 1621.

Verse 37.—"*Yea, they sacrificed their sons,*" etc. From this we learn that inconsiderate zeal is a flimsy pretext in favour of any act of devotion. For by how much the Jews were under the influence of burning zeal, by so much does the prophet convict them of being guilty of greater wickedness; because their madness carried them away to such a pitch of enthusiasm, that they did not spare even their own offspring. Were good intentions meritorious, as idolaters suppose, then indeed the laying aside of all natural affection in sacrificing their own children was a deed deserving the highest praise. But when men act under the impulse of their own capricious humour, the more they occupy themselves with acts of external worship, the more do they increase their guilt. For what difference was there between Abraham and those persons of whom the prophet makes mention, but that the former, under the influence of faith, was ready to offer up his son, while the latter, carried away by the impulse of intemperate zeal, cast off all natural affection, and imbrued their hands in the blood of their own offspring.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 37.—"*Devils,*" שׁדים, *Shedim.* It appears that children were sacrificed to the deities thus named; that they were considered to be of an angry nature, and inimical to the human race, and thus the object of the homage rendered to them was to avert calamities. The name שׁדים may signify either *lord* or *master*, or anything that is *black*, it being derived from an Arabic *Ain Vav* verb—viz., سأى *to be black*, or *to be master.*—*John Jahn, in "Biblical Antiquities."*

Verses 37, 38.—We stand astonished, doubtless, at this horrid, barbarous, and unnatural impiety, of offering children by fire to a Moloch: but how little

is it considered, that children, brought up in the ways of ignorance, error, vanity, folly, and vice, are more effectually sacrificed to the great adversary of mankind!—*George Horne.*

Verse 39.—"*And went a whoring with their own inventions.*"—As harlotry is one of the most abominable of sins that can be committed by a daughter or a wife: so often in the Scriptures turning from God and especially the practice of idolatry is called whoredom and fornication, Ps. lxxiii. 27: Ex. xxxiv. 15, 16.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 40.—"*He abhorred his own inheritance.*" Whenever great love sinks into great hate it is termed *abhorrence.*—*Lorinus.*

Verse 43.—"*They were brought low for their iniquity.*" Sin is of a weakening and impoverishing nature; it has weakened all mankind, and taken from them their moral strength to do good; and has brought them to poverty and want; to be beggars on the dunghill; to a pit wherein is no water; and left them in a hopeless and helpless condition; yea, it brings the people of God often times after conversion into a low estate, when God hides his face because of it, temptations are strong, grace is weak, and they become lukewarm and indifferent to spiritual things.—*John Gill.*

Verse 46.—"*He made them also to be pitied of all them that carried them captives.*" This improved feeling towards the Jews through God's influence appears in Dan. i. 9; as Joseph similarly had his captivity improved by God's favour (Gen. xxxix. 21). So Evil-merodach, King of Babylon, treated kindly Jehoiachin, king of Judah (2 Kings xxv. 27).—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 47.—"*Gather us.*" Bishop Patrick says that, in his opinion, this verse refers to those, who, in the days of Saul, or before, were taken prisoners by the Philistines, or other nations; whom David prays God to gather to their own land again; that they might worship him in that place which he had prepared for the ark of his presence.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 48.—"*Amen.*" Martin Luther said once of the Lord's Prayer that "it was the greatest martyr on earth, because it was used so frequently without thought and feeling, without reverence and faith." This quaint remark, as true as it is sad, applies perhaps with still greater force to the word "*Amen.*"

Familiar to us from our infancy is the sound of this word, which has found a home wherever the natives have learnt to adore Israel's God and Saviour. It has been adopted, and without translation retained, in all languages in which the gospel of Jesus the Son of David is preached. The literal signification, "So be it," is known to all; yet few consider the deep meaning, the great solemnity, and the abundant consolation treasured up in this word, which has formed for centuries the conclusion of the prayers and praises of God's people. A word which is frequently used without due thoughtfulness, and unaccompanied with the feeling which it is intended to call forth, loses its power from this very familiarity, and though constantly on our lips, lies bedridden in the dormitory of our soul. But it is a great word this word "*Amen;*" and Luther has truly said, "As your Amen is, so has been your prayer."

It is a word of venerable history in Israel and in the church. The word dates as far back as the law of Moses. When a solemn oath was pronounced by the priest, the response of the person who was adjured consisted simply of the word "*Amen.*" In like manner the people responded "*Amen*" when, from the heights of Ebal and Gerizim, the blessings and the curses of the divine law were pronounced. Again, at the great festival which David made when the ark of God was brought from Obed-Edom, the psalm of praise which Asaph and his brethren sang concluded with the words, "Blessed be the Lord God of

Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen" (1 Chron. xvi. 36). Thus we find in the Psalms, not merely that David concludes his psalm of praise with the word *Amen*, but he says, "*And let all the people say, Amen.*"—*Adolph Saphir, in "The Lord's Prayer,"* 1870.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Take this verse as the theme of the Psalm, and we shall then see that its exhortation to praise, I. Is directed to a special people: chosen, redeemed, but sinful, borne with, and forgiven. II. Is supported by abundant arguments. Man not to be praised, for he sins. God gives in his goodness, and forgives in his mercy, and is therefore to be thanked. III. Is as applicable now as ever: for our story is a transcript of Israel's.

Verse 2.—I. A challenge. II. A suggestion: at least let us do what we can. III. An ambition: in the ages to come we will make known with the church to angels, and all intelligent beings, the mighty acts of divine grace. IV. A question—shall I be there?

Verse 3.—The blessedness of a godly life.

Verse 4.—I. The language of Humility: "Remember me, O Lord." Let me not escape thy notice amongst the many millions of creatures under thy care. II. The language of Faith. 1. That God has a people to whom he shows special favour. 2. That he himself has provided salvation for them. III. The language of prayer. 1. For the free gift of salvation. 2. For the common salvation—not wishing to be peculiar, but to be as "Thy people," taking them for all in all, both here and hereafter. Walking in the footsteps of the flock.

> "Be this my glory, Lord, to be
> Joined to thy saints, and near to thee."
>
> —*G. R.*

Verses 4, 7, 45.—In verse 4, a remembrance desired. In verse 7, a failure of remembrance deplored. In verse 45, a divine remembrance extolled.

Verse 5.—The Persons: "Thy chosen"; "Thy nation"; "Thine inheritance." II. The Privileges: "The good of thy chosen"; "The gladness of thy nation"; "The glory of thine inheritance." III. The Pleas: "That I may see," etc. They were once as I am: make me what they are now. 2. My salvation is everything to me. "That I may see," etc. "That I may rejoice," etc. They are many, I am but one. "That I may glory," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 6.—In what respects men may be partakers in the sins of their ancestors.

Verses 7, 8.—I. On man's part a darkened understanding, ungrateful forgetfulness, and provocation. II. On God's part: understanding discovering a reason for mercy; memory mindful of the covenant; patience revealing its power.

Verses 7, 8.—I. A special provocation; they murmured at the Red Sea. II. A special deliverance; "Nevertheless," etc. III. A special Design; "For his own sake"; "That he might make his power known."—*G. R.*

Verse 8.—Salvation by grace a grand display of power.

Verse 8.—"Why are men saved?" See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 115. I. The glorious Saviour, "He." II. The favoured persons, who are they? 1. They were a stupid people: "Our fathers understood not," etc., ver. 7. 2. An ungrateful people: "They remembered not," etc., verses 7, 13, 24, etc. 3. A provoking people. III. The reason of salvation: "He saved them for his name's sake." The name of God is his person, his attributes, and his nature.

We might, perhaps, include this also: "My name is in him"—that is, in Christ; he saves us for the sake of Christ, who is the name of God. He saved them that he might manifest his nature: "God is love." He saved them to vindicate his name. IV. The obstacles removed: "Nevertheless."

Verse 9.—"Israel at the Red Sea." See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 72. I. Israel's three difficulties. 1. The Red Sea in front of them. This was not put there by an enemy; but by God himself. The Red Sea represents some great and trying providence placed in the path of every new-born child of God, to try his faith, and the sincerity of his trust in God. 2. The Egyptians behind them,—the representatives of the sins which we thought were dead and gone. 3. The third difficulty was faint hearts within them. II. Israel's three helps. 1. Providence. 2. Their knowledge that they were the covenant people of God. 3. The man,—Moses. So the believer's hope and help is in the God-man Christ Jesus. III. God's grand design in it. To give them a thorough baptism into his service, consecrating them for ever to himself (1 Cor. x. 1, 2).

Verse 9 (*second clause*).—Dangerous and difficult paths rendered safe and easy by God's leadership.

Verse 11 (*second clause*).—Song over sins forgiven.

Verses 12—14.—The faith of nature, based on sight, causes transient joy, soon evaporates, dies in utter unbelief, and conducts to greater sin.

Verses 13—15.—I. Mercies are sooner forgotten than trials: "They soon forgat," etc. We write our afflictions on marble, our mercies upon sand. II. We should wait *for* God, as well as *upon* God: "They waited not," etc. III. Immoderate desire for what we have not of worldly goods, tempts God to deprive us of what we have: ver. 14. IV. Prayer may be answered for evil as well as for good: "He gave them their request," then smote them with a plague. V. Carnal indulgence is inimical to spiritual-mindedness: ver. 15. Better have a lean body and healthy soul, than a healthy body and leanness of soul. "Poor in this world, rich in faith." There are few of whom it can be said, "I wish thou mayest prosper and be in health," etc. (3 John 2).—*G. R.*

Verse 14.—The wickedness of inordinate desires. I. They are out of place—"in the wilderness." II. They are assaults upon God—"and tempted God." III. They are despisers of former mercies—see preceding verses. IV. They involve solemn danger—see following verse.

Verse 16.—The sin of envy. Its base nature, its cruel actions, its unscrupulous ingratitude, its daring assaults, its abomination before God.

Verse 19.—The sinner as an inventor.

Verses 19—22.—I. The Sin remembered. 1. Idolatry: not forgetting God merely, or disowning him, but setting up an idol in his place. 2. Idolatry of the worst kind: changing the glory of God into the similitude of an ox, etc. 3. The idolatry of Egypt under which they had suffered, and from which they had been delivered. 4. Idolatry after many wonderful interpositions of the true God in their behalf. II. The Remembrance of Sin. 1. For Humiliation. It was the sin of their fathers. 2. For self-condemnation. "We have sinned with our fathers." It was our nature in them, and it is their nature in us that has committed this great sin.

Verse 23.—Moses, the intercessor, a type of our Lord. Carefully study his pleading as recorded in Exod. xxxii.

Verse 23.—Mediation required: "He said that he would destroy them," etc. II. Mediation offered: "Moses stood before him in the breach." III. Mediation accepted: "To turn away his wrath," etc. Exod. xxxii.—*G. R.*

Verses 24—26.—Murmuring. I. Arises from despising our mercies. II. Is fostered by unbelief. III. Is indulged in all sorts of places. IV. Makes men deaf to the Lord's voice. V. Provokes great judgments from the Lord.

Verses 24—27.—I. The Rest promised: "The pleasant land." II. The Refusal of the Rest: "They despised," etc. III. The Reason of the Refusal: unbelief. "They could not enter in because of unbelief."—*G. R.*

Verses 30, 31.—The effects of one decisive act for God ; immediate, personal, and for posterity.

Verses 32, 33.—I. The afflictions of God's people are for the trial of their faith. II. The trial of their faith is to bring them from dependence upon circumstances to depend upon God himself. III. The forbearance of God with his people is greater than that of the best of men.—*G. R.*

Verse 33.—I. What it is so to speak unadvisedly. II. What is the great cause of it—"they provoked his spirit." III. What the results may be.

Verses 34—42.—I. What Israel did not do. They began well, but did not complete the conquest of their foes : ver. 34. II. What they did do : ver. 35—39. 1. They became friendly with them. 2. They adopted their habits : "learned their works." 3. They embraced their religion : "served their idols." 4. They imitated their cruelties ; ver. 37, 38. 5. They did worse than the heathen (ver. 39), they added wicked inventions of their own. III. What God did to them : ver. 40—42. He gave them into the hands of their enemies, and suffered them to be severely oppressed by them. We must either conquer all our foes or be conquered by them. Bring your shield from the battle or be brought home upon it.—*G. R.*

Verse 37. –Moloch-worship in modern times. Children sacrificed to fashion, wealth, and loveless marriage among the higher classes. Bad example, drinking customs, etc., among the poorer sort. A needful subject.

Verses 44, 45.—Sin in God's people. I. Is very provoking to God. II. Ensures chastisement. III. Is to be sincerely mourned—"their cry." IV. Will be graciously forgiven, and its effect removed. So the covenant promises.

Verse 47.—I. An earnest Prayer : "Save us, O Lord," etc. II. A Believing Prayer : "O Lord *our* God." III. A humble Prayer : "Gather us from among the heathen." IV. A sincere Prayer : "To give thanks unto thy holy name" ; to own thy justice and holiness in all thy ways. V. A confident Prayer : "To triumph in thy praise." None but bruised spices give forth such odours.—*G. R.*

Verse 48.—I. God is to be praised as the "God of Israel." 1. Of typical Israel. 2. Of the true Israel. II. He is to be praised as the God of Israel under all circumstances : for his judgments as well as for his mercies. III. At all times : "From everlasting to everlasting." IV. By all people : "Let all the people say, Amen." V. As the beginning and end of every song : "Praise ye the Lord."—*G. R.*

Verse 48.—"*Let all the people say, Amen.*" The exhortation to universal praise. All men are indebted to the Lord, all have sinned, all hear the gospel, all his people are saved. Unanimity in praise is pleasant, and promotes unity in other matters.

HERE ENDETH THE FOURTH BOOK OF
THE PSALMS.

PSALM CVII.

SUBJECT, ETC.—*This is a choice song for the redeemed of the Lord* (*verse* 2). *Although it celebrates providential deliverances, and therefore may be sung by any man whose life has been preserved in time of danger; yet under cover of this, it mainly magnifies the Lord for spiritual blessings, of which temporal favours are but types and shadows. The theme is* thanksgiving, and the motives for it. *The construction of the psalm is highly poetical, and merely as a composition it would be hard to find its compeer among human productions. The bards of the Bible hold no second place among the sons of song.*

DIVISION.—*The psalmist commences by dedicating his poem to the redeemed who have been gathered from captivity,* 1—3; *he then likens their history to that of travellers lost in the desert,* 4—9; *to that of prisoners in iron bondage,* 10—16; *to that of sick men,* 17—22; *and to that of mariners tossed with tempest,* 23—32. *In the closing verses the judgment of God on the rebellious, and the mercies of God to his own afflicted people are made the burden of the song,* 33—42; *and then the psalm closes with a sort of summing up, in verse* 43, *which declares that those who study the works and ways of the Lord shall be sure to see and praise his goodness.*

EXPOSITION.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD, for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so,* whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

1. "*O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for he is good.*" It is all we can give him, and the least we can give; therefore let us diligently render to him our thanksgiving. The psalmist is in earnest in the exhortation, hence the use of the interjection "O," to intensify his words: let us be at all times thoroughly fervent in the praises of the Lord, both with our lips and with our lives, by thanksgiving and thanks-living. JEHOVAH, for that is the name here used, is not to be worshipped with groans and cries, but with thanks, for he is good; and these thanks should be heartily rendered, for his is no common goodness: he is good by nature, and essence, and proven to be good in all the acts of his eternity. Compared with him there is none good, no, not one: but he is essentially, perpetually, superlatively, infinitely good. We are the perpetual partakers of his goodness, and therefore ought above all his creatures to magnify his name. Our praise should be increased by the fact that the divine goodness is not a transient thing, but in the attribute of mercy abides for ever the same, "*for his mercy endureth for ever.*" The word *endureth* has been properly supplied by the translators, but yet it somewhat restricts the sense, which will be better seen if we read it, "*for his mercy for ever.*" That mercy had no beginning, and shall never know an end. Our sin required that goodness should display itself to us in the form of mercy, and it has done so, and will do so evermore; let us not be slack in praising the goodness which thus adapts itself to our fallen nature.

2. "*Let the redeemed of the* LORD *say so.*" Whatever others may think or say, the redeemed have overwhelming reasons for declaring the goodness of the Lord. Theirs is a peculiar redemption, and for it they ought to render peculiar praise. The Redeemer is so glorious, the ransom price so immense, and the redemption so complete, that they are under sevenfold obligations to give

thanks unto the Lord, and to exhort others to do so. Let them not only feel so but *say* so; let them both sing and bid their fellows sing. "*Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.*" Snatched by superior power away from fierce oppressions, they are bound above all men to adore the Lord, their Liberator. Theirs is a divine redemption, "he hath redeemed" them, and no one else has done it. His own unaided arm has wrought out their deliverance. Should not emancipted slaves be grateful to the hand which set them free? What gratitude can suffice for a deliverance from the power of sin, death, and hell? In heaven itself there is no sweeter hymn than that whose burden is, "Thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood."

3. "*And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.*" Gathering follows upon redeeming. The captives of old were restored to their own land from every quarter of the earth, and even from beyond the sea; for the word translated *south* is really *the sea*. No matter what divides, the Lord will gather his own into one body, and first on earth by "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," and then in heaven by one common bliss they shall be known to be the one people of the One God. What a glorious Shepherd must he be who thus collects the blood-bought flock from the remotest regions, guides them through countless perils, and at last makes them to lie down in the green pastures of Paradise. Some have wandered one way and some another, they have all left Immanuel's land and strayed as far as they could, and great are the grace and power by which they are all collected into one flock by the Lord Jesus. With one heart and voice let the redeemed praise the Lord who gathers them into one.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

4. "*They wandered in the wilderness.*" They *wandered*, for the track was lost, no vestige of a road remained; worse still, they wandered *in a wilderness*, where all around was burning sand. They were lost in the worst possible place, even as the sinner is who is lost in sin; they wandered up and down in vain searches and researches as a sinner does when he is awakened and sees his lost estate; but it ended in nothing, for they still continued in the wilderness, though they had hoped to escape from it. "*In a solitary way.*" No dwelling of man was near, and no other company of travellers passed within hail. Solitude is a great intensifier of misery. The loneliness of a desert has a most depressing influence upon the man who is lost in the boundless waste. The traveller's way in the wilderness is a *waste* way, and when he leaves even that poor, barren trail, to get utterly beyond the path of man, he is in a wretched plight indeed. A soul without sympathy is on the borders of hell: a solitary way is the way of despair. "*They found no city to dwell in.*" How could they? There was none. Israel in the wilderness abode under canvas, and enjoyed none of the comforts of settled life; wanderers in the Sahara find no town or village. Men when under distress of soul find nothing to rest upon, no comfort and no peace; their efforts after salvation are many, weary, and

disappointing, and the dread solitude of their hearts fills them with dire distress.

5. "*Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.*" The spirits sink when the bodily frame becomes exhausted by long privations. Who can keep his courage up when he is ready to fall to the ground at every step through utter exhaustion? The supply of food is all eaten, the water is spent in the bottles, and there are neither fields nor streams in the desert, the heart therefore sinks in dire despair. Such is the condition of an awakened conscience before it knows the Lord Jesus; it is full of unsatisfied cravings, painful needs, and heavy fears. It is utterly spent and without strength, and there is nothing in the whole creation which can minister to its refreshment.

6. "*Then they cried unto the* LORD *in their trouble.*" Not till they were in extremities did they pray, but the mercy is that they prayed *then*, and prayed in the right manner, with a *cry*, and to the right person, even *to the Lord*; Nothing else remained for them to do; they could not help themselves, or find help in others, and therefore they cried to God. Supplications which are forced out of us by stern necessity are none the less acceptable with God; but, indeed, they have all the more prevalence, since they are evidently sincere, and make a powerful appeal to the divine pity. Some men will never pray till they are half-starved, and for their best interests it is far better for them to be empty and faint than to be full and stouthearted. If hunger brings us to our knees it is more useful to us than feasting; if thirst drives us to the fountain it is better than the deepest draughts of worldly joys; and if fainting leads to crying it is better than the strength of the mighty. "*And he delivered them out of their distresses.*" Deliverance follows prayer most surely. The cry must have been very feeble, for they were faint, and their faith was as weak as their cry; but yet they were heard, and heard at once. A little delay would have been their death: but there was none, for the Lord was ready to save them. The Lord delights to come in when no one else can be of the slightest avail. The case was hopeless till Jehovah interposed, and then all was changed immediately; the people were shut up, straitened, and almost pressed to death, but enlargement came to them at once when they began to remember their God, and look to him in prayer. Those deserve to die of hunger who will not so much as ask for bread, and he who being lost in a desert will not beg the aid of a guide cannot be pitied even if he perish in the wilds and feed the vultures with his flesh.

7. "*And he led them forth by the right way.*" There are many wrong ways, but only one right one, and into this none can lead us but God himself. When the Lord is leader the way is sure to be right; we never need question that. Forth from the pathless mazes of the desert he conducted the lost ones; he found the way, made the way, and enabled them to walk along it, faint and hungry as they were. "*That they might go to a city of habitation.*" The end was worthy of the way: he did not lead them from one desert to another, but he gave the wanderers an abode, the weary ones a place of rest. *They* found no city to dwell in, but *he* found one readily enough. What *we* can do and what *God* can do are two very different things. What a difference it made to them to leave their solitude for a city, their trackless path for well-frequented streets, and their faintness of heart for the refreshment of a home! Far greater are the changes which divine love works in the condition of sinners when God answers their prayers and brings them to Jesus. Shall not the Lord be magnified for such special mercies? Can we who have enjoyed them sit down in ungrateful silence?

8. "*Oh that men would praise the* LORD *for his goodness.*" Men are not mentioned here in the original, but the word is fitly supplied by the translators; the psalmist would have all things in existence magnify Jehovah's name. Surely *men* will do this without being exhorted to it when the deliverance is fresh in their memories. They must be horrible ingrates who will not honour such a deliverer for so happy a rescue from the most cruel death. It is well that

the redeemed should be stirred up to bless the Lord again and again, for preserved life deserves life-long thankfulness. Even those who have not encountered the like peril, and obtained the like deliverance, should bless the Lord in sympathy with their fellows, sharing their joy. "*And for his wonderful works to the children of men.*" These favours are bestowed upon *our* race, upon children of the family to which we belong, and therefore we ought to join in the praise. The children of men are so insignificant, so feeble, and so undeserving, that it is a great wonder that the Lord should do anything for them; but he is not content with doing little works, he puts forth his wisdom, power, and love to perform marvels on the behalf of those who seek him. In the life of each one of the redeemed there is a world of wonders, and therefore from each there should resound a world of praises. As to the marvels of grace which the Lord has wrought for his church as a whole there is no estimating them, they are as high above our thoughts as the heavens are high above the earth. When shall the day dawn when the favoured race of man shall be as devoted to the praise of God as they are distinguished by the favour of God?

9. "*For he satisfieth the longing soul.*" This is the summary of the lost traveller's experience. He who in a natural sense has been rescued from perishing in a howling wilderness ought to bless the Lord who brings him again to eat bread among men. The spiritual sense is, however, the more rich in instruction. The Lord sets us longing and then completely satisfies us. That longing leads us into solitude, separation, thirst, faintness and self-despair, and all these conduct us to prayer, faith, divine guidance, satisfying of the soul's thirst, and rest: the good hand of the Lord is to be seen in the whole process and in the divine result. "*And filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*" As for thirst he gives satisfaction, so for hunger he supplies filling. In both cases the need is more than met, there is an abundance in the supply which is well worthy of notice: the Lord does nothing in a niggardly fashion; satisfying and filling are his peculiar modes of treating his guests; none who come under the Lord's providing ever complain of short commons. Nor does he fill the hungry with common fare, but with *goodness* itself. It is not so much good, as the essence of goodness which he bestows on needy suppliants. Shall man be thus royally supplied and return no praise for the largesses of love? It must not be so. We will even now give thanks with all the redeemed church, and pray for the time when the whole earth shall be filled with his glory.

10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron;

11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and *there was* none to help.

13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saved them out of their distresses.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

15 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

16 For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

10. "*Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.*" The cell is dark of itself, and the fear of execution casts a still denser gloom over the prison. Such is the cruelty of man to man that tens of thousands have been made to

linger in places only fit to be tombs; unhealthy, suffocating, filthy sepulchres, where they have sickened and died of broken hearts. Meanwhile the dread of sudden death has been the most hideous part of the punishment; the prisoners have felt as if the chill shade of death himself froze them to the very marrow. The state of a soul under conviction of sin is forcibly symbolized by such a condition; persons in that state cannot see the promises which would yield them comfort, they sit still in the inactivity of despair, they fear the approach of judgment, and are thereby as much distressed as if they were at death's door. "*Being bound in affliction and iron.*" Many prisoners have been thus doubly fettered in heart and hand; or the text may mean that affliction becomes as an iron band to them, or that the iron chains caused them great affliction. None know these things but those who have felt them; we should prize our liberty more if we knew by actual experience what manacles and fetters mean. In a spiritual sense affliction frequently attends conviction of sin, and then the double grief causes a double bondage. In such cases the iron enters into the soul, the poor captives cannot stir because of their bonds, cannot rise to hope because of their grief, and have no power because of their despair. Misery is the companion of all those who are shut up and cannot come forth. O ye who are made free by Christ Jesus, remember those who are in bonds.

11. "*Because they rebelled against the words of God.*" This was the general cause of bondage among the ancient people of God, they were given over to their adversaries because they were not loyal to the Lord. God's words are not to be trifled with, and those who venture on such rebellion will bring themselves into bondage. "*And contemned the counsel of the Most High.*" They thought that they knew better than the Judge of all the earth, and therefore they left his ways and walked in their own. When men do not follow the divine counsel they give the most practical proof of their contempt for it. Those who will not be bound by God's law will, ere long, be bound by the fetters of judgment. There is too much contemning of the divine counsel, even among Christians, and hence so few of them know the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free.

12. "*Therefore he brought down their heart with labour.*" In eastern prisons men are frequently made to labour like beasts of the field. As they have no liberty, so they have no rest. This soon subdues the stoutest heart, and makes the proud boaster sing another tune. Trouble and hard toil are enough to tame a lion. God has methods of abating the loftiness of rebellious looks; the cell and the mill make even giants tremble. "*They fell down, and there was none to help.*" Stumbling on in the dark beneath their weary task, they at last fell prone upon the ground, but no one came to pity them or to lift them up. Their fall might be fatal for aught that any man cared about them; their misery was unseen, or, if observed, no one could interfere between them and their tyrant masters. In such a wretched plight the rebellious Israelite became more lowly in mind, and thought more tenderly of his God and of his offences against him. When a soul finds all its efforts at self-salvation prove abortive, and feels that it is now utterly without strength, then the Lord is at work hiding pride from man and preparing the afflicted one to receive his mercy. The spiritual case which is here figuratively described is desperate, and therefore affords the finer field for the divine interposition; some of us remember well how brightly mercy shone in our prison, and what music the fetters made when they fell off from our hands. Nothing but the Lord's love could have delivered us; without it we must have utterly perished.

13. "*Then they cried unto the* LORD *in their trouble.*" Not a prayer till then. While there was any to help below they would not look above. No cries till their hearts were brought down and their hopes were all dead—*then* they cried, but not before. So many a man offers what he calls prayer when he is in good case and thinks well of himself, but in very deed the only real cry to God is that which is forced out of him by a sense of utter helplessness and misery.

We pray best when we are fallen on our faces in painful helplessness. "*And he saved them out of their distresses.*" Speedily and willingly he sent relief. They were long before they cried, but he was not long before he saved. They had applied everywhere else before they came to him, but when they did address themselves to him, they were welcome at once. He who saved men in the open wilderness can also save in the close prison: bolts and bars cannot shut him out, nor long shut in his redeemed ones.

14. "*He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death.*" The Lord in providence fetches out prisoners from their cells and bids them breathe the sweet fresh air again, and then he takes off their fetters, and gives liberty to their aching limbs. So also he frees men from care and trouble, and especially from the misery and slavery of sin. This he does with his own hand, for in the experience of all the saints it is certified that there is no jail-delivery unless by the Judge himself. "*And brake their bands in sunder.*" Set them free by force, so liberating them that they could not be chained again, for he had broken the manacles to pieces. The Lord's deliverances are of the most complete and triumphant kind, he neither leaves the soul in darkness nor in bonds, nor does he permit the powers of evil again to enthral the liberated captive. What he does is done for ever. Glory be to his name.

15. "*Oh that men would praise the* LORD *for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.*" The sight of such goodness makes a right-minded man long to see the Lord duly honoured for his amazing mercy. When dungeon doors fly open, and chains are snapped, who can refuse to adore the glorious goodness of the Lord? It makes the heart sick to think of such gracious mercies remaining unsung: we cannot but plead with men to remember their obligations and extol the Lord their God.

16. "*For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*" This verse belongs to that which precedes it, and sums up the mercy experienced by captives. The Lord breaks the strongest gates and bars when the time comes to set free his prisoners: and spiritually the Lord Jesus has broken the most powerful of spiritual bonds and made us free indeed. Brass and iron are as tow before the flame of Jesus' love. The gates of hell shall not prevail against us, neither shall the bars of the grave detain us. Those of us who have experienced his redeeming power must and will praise the Lord for the wonders of his grace displayed on our behalf.

17 Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

18 Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.

19 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saveth them out of their distresses.

20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions.

21 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

17. "*Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.*" Many sicknesses are the direct result of foolish acts. Thoughtless and lustful men by drunkenness, gluttony, and the indulgence of their passions fill their bodies with diseases of the worst kind. Sin is at the bottom of all sorrow, but some sorrows are the immediate results of wickedness: men by a course of transgression afflict themselves and are fools for their pains. Worse still, even

when they are in affliction they are fools still ; and if they were brayed in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet would not their folly depart from them. From one transgression they go on to many iniquities, and while under the rod they add sin to sin. Alas, even the Lord's own people sometimes play the fool in this sad manner.

18. "*Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat.*" Appetite departs from men when they are sick : the best of food is nauseous to them, their stomach turns against it. "*And they draw near unto the gates of death.*" From want of food, and from the destructive power of their malady, they slide gradually down till they lie at the door of the grave ; neither does the skill of the physician suffice to stay their downward progress. As they cannot eat there is no support given to the system, and as the disease rages their little strength is spent in pain and misery. Thus it is with souls afflicted with a sense of sin, they cannot find comfort in the choicest promises, but turn away with loathing even from the gospel, so that they gradually decay into the grave of despair. The mercy is that though near the gates of death they are not yet inside the sepulchre.

19. "*Then they cry unto the* LORD *in their trouble.*" They join the praying legion at last. Saul also is among the prophets. The fool lays aside his motley in prospect of the shroud, and betakes himself to his knees. What a cure for the soul sickness of body is often made to be by the Lord's grace ! "*And he saveth them out of their distresses.*" Prayer is as effectual on a sick bed as in the wilderness or in prison ; it may be tried in all places and circumstances with certain result. We may pray about our bodily pains and weaknesses, and we may look for answers too. When we have no appetite for meat we may have an appetite for prayer. He who cannot feed on the word of God may yet turn to God himself and find mercy.

20. "*He sent his word and healed them.*" Man is not healed by medicine alone, but by the word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God is man restored from going down to the grave. A word will do it, a word has done it thousands of times. "*And delivered them from their destructions.*" They escape though dangers had surrounded them, dangers many and deadly. The word of the Lord has a great delivering power ; he has but to speak and the armies of death flee in an instant. Sin-sick souls should remember the power of *the Word*, and be much in hearing it and meditating upon it.

Spiritually considered, these verses describe a sin-sick soul : foolish but yet aroused to a sense of guilt, it refuses comfort from any and every quarter, and a lethargy of despair utterly paralyses it. To its own apprehension nothing remains but utter destruction in many forms : the gates of death stand open before it, and it is, in its own apprehension, hurried in that direction. Then is the soul driven to cry in the bitterness of its grief unto the Lord, and Christ, the eternal Word, comes with healing power in the direst extremity, saving to the uttermost.

21. "*Oh that men would praise the* LORD *for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.*" It is marvellous that men can be restored from sickness and yet refuse to bless the Lord. It would seem impossible that they should forget such great mercy, for we should expect to see both themselves and the friends to whom they are restored uniting in a lifelong act of thanksgiving. Yet when ten are healed it is seldom that more than one returns to give glory to God. Alas, where are the nine ? When a spiritual cure is wrought by the great Physician, praise is one of the surest signs of renewed health. A mind rescued from the disease of sin and the weary pains of conviction, must and will adore Jehovah Rophi, the healing God : yet it were well if there were a thousand times as much even of this.

22. "*And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving.*" In such a case let there be gifts and oblations as well as words. Let the good Physician have his fee of gratitude. Let life become a sacrifice to him who has prolonged it, let the deed of self-denying gratitude be repeated again and again : there must be many cheerful sacrifices to celebrate the marvellous boon. "*And declare*

his works with rejoicing." Such things are worth telling, for the personal declaration honours God, relieves ourselves, comforts others, and puts all men in possession of facts concerning the divine goodness which they will not be able to ignore.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

24 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.

25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

31 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

23. "*They that go down to the sea in ships.*" Navigation was so little practised among the Israelites that mariners were invested with a high degree of mystery, and their craft was looked upon as one of singular daring and peril. Tales of the sea thrilled all hearts with awe, and he who had been to Ophir or to Tarshish and had returned alive was looked upon as a man of renown, an ancient mariner to be listened to with reverent attention. Voyages were looked on as descending to an abyss, "going down to the sea in ships;" whereas now our bolder and more accustomed sailors talk of the "high seas." "*That do business in great waters.*" If they had not had business to do, they would never have ventured on the ocean, for we never read in the Scriptures of any man taking his pleasure on the sea: so averse was the Israelitish mind to seafaring, that we do not hear of even Solomon himself keeping a pleasure boat. The Mediterranean was "the great sea" to David and his countrymen, and they viewed those who had business upon it with no small degree of admiration.

24. "*These see the works of the* LORD." Beyond the dwellers on the land they see the Lord's greatest works, or at least such as stayers at home judge to be so when they hear the report thereof. Instead of the ocean proving to be a watery wilderness, it is full of God's creatures, and if we were to attempt to escape from his presence by flying to the uttermost parts of it, we should only rush into Jehovah's arms, and find ourselves in the very centre of his workshop. "*And his wonders in the deep.*" They see wonders in it and on it. It is in itself a wonder and it swarms with wonders. Seamen, because they have fewer objects around them, are more observant of those they have than landsmen are, and hence they are said to *see* the wonders in the deep. At the same time, the ocean really does contain many of the more striking of God's creatures, and it is the scene of many of the more tremendous of the physical phenomena by which the power and majesty of the Lord are revealed among

men. The chief wonders alluded to by the Psalmist are a sudden storm and the calm which follows it.

All believers have not the same deep experience; but for wise ends, that they may do business for him, the Lord sends some of his saints to the sea of soul-trouble, and there they see, as others do not, the wonders of divine grace. Sailing over the deeps of inward depravity, the waste waters of poverty, the billows of persecution, and the rough waves of temptation, they need God above all others, and they find him.

25. "*For he commandeth:*" his word is enough for anything, he has but to will it and the tempest rages. "*And raiseth the stormy wind.*" It seemed to lie asleep before, but it knows its Master's bidding, and is up at once in all its fury. "*Which lifteth up the waves thereof.*" The glassy surface of the sea is broken, and myriads of white heads appear and rage and toss themselves to and fro as the wind blows upon them. Whereas they were lying down in quiet before, the waves rise in their might and leap towards the sky as soon as the howling of the wind awakens them.

Thus it needs but a word from God and the soul is in troubled waters, tossed to and fro with a thousand afflictions. Doubts, fears, terrors, anxieties lift their heads like so many angry waves, when once the Lord allows the storm-winds to beat upon us.

26. "*They mount up to the heaven.*" Borne aloft on the crest of the wave, the sailors and their vessels appear to climb the skies, but it is only for a moment, for very soon in the trough of the sea "*they go down again to the depths.*" As if their vessel were but a sea bird, the mariners are tossed "up and down, up and down, from the base of the wave to the billow's crown." "*Their soul is melted because of trouble.*" Weary, wet, dispirited, hopeless of escape, their heart is turned to water, and they seem to have no manhood left.

Those who have been on the spiritual deep in one of the great storms which occasionally agitate the soul know what this verse means. In these spiritual cyclones presumption alternates with despair, indifference with agony! No heart is left for anything, courage is gone, hope is almost dead. Such an experience is as real as the tossing of a literal tempest and far more painful. Some of us have weathered many such an internal hurricane, and have indeed seen the Lord's wondrous works.

27. "*They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man.*" The violent motion of the vessel prevents their keeping their legs, and their fears drive them out of all power to use their brains, and therefore they look like intoxicated men. "*And are at their wit's end.*" What more can they do? They have used every expedient known to navigation, but the ship is so strained and beaten about that they know not how to keep her afloat.

Here too the spiritual mariner's log agrees with that of the sailor on the sea. We have staggered frightfully! We could stand to nothing and hold by nothing. We knew not what to do, and could have done nothing if we had known it. We were as men distracted, and felt as if destruction itself would be better than our horrible state of suspense. As for wit and wisdom, they were clean washed out of us, we felt ourselves to be at a nonplus altogether.

28. "*Then they cry unto the* LORD *in their trouble.*" Though at their wit's end, they had wit enough to pray; their heart was melted, and it ran out in cries for help. This was well and ended well, for it is written, "*And he brought them out of their distresses.*" Prayer is good in a storm. We may pray staggering and reeling, and pray when we are at our wit's end. God will hear us amid the thunder and answer us out of the storm. He brought their distresses upon the mariners, and therefore they did well to turn to him for the removal of them; nor did they look in vain.

29. "*He maketh the storm a calm.*" He reveals his power in the sudden and marvellous transformations which occur at his bidding. He commanded the storm and now he ordains a calm: God is in all natural phenomena, and we

do well to recognise his working. "*So that the waves thereof are still.*" They bow in silence at his feet. Where huge billows leaped aloft there is scarce a ripple to be seen. When God makes peace it is peace indeed, the peace of God which passeth all understanding. He can in an instant change the condition of a man's mind, so that it shall seem an absolute miracle to him that he has passed so suddenly from hurricane to calm. O that the Lord would thus work in the reader, should his heart be storm-beaten with outward troubles or inward fears. Lord, say the word and peace will come at once.

30. "*Then are they glad because they be quiet.*" No one can appreciate this verse unless he has been in a storm at sea. No music can be sweeter than the rattling of the chain as the shipmen let down the anchor; and no place seems more desirable than the little cove, or the wide bay, in which the ship rests in peace. "*So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.*" The rougher the voyage the more the mariners long for port, and heaven becomes more and more "a desired haven," as our trials multiply. By storms and by favourable breezes, through tempest and fair weather, the great Pilot and Ruler of the sea brings mariners to port, and his people to heaven. He must have the glory of the successful voyage of time, and when we are moored in the river of life above we shall take care that his praises are not forgotten. We should long ago have been wrecked if it had not been for his preserving hand, and our only hope of outliving the storms of the future is based upon his wisdom, faithfulness and power. Our heavenly haven shall ring with shouts of grateful joy when once we reach its blessed shore.

31. "*Oh that men would praise the* Lord *for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*" Let the sea sound forth Jehovah's praises because of his delivering grace. As the sailor touches the shore let him lift the solemn hymn to heaven, and let others who see him rescued from the jaws of death unite in his thanksgiving.

32. "*Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people.*" Thanks for such mercies should be given in public in the place where men congregate for worship. "*And praise him in the assembly of the elders.*" The praise should be presented with great solemnity in the presence of men of years, experience, and influence. High and weighty service should be rendered for great and distinguished favours, and therefore let the sacrifice be presented with due decorum and with grave seriousness. Often when men hear of a narrow escape from shipwreck they pass over the matter with a careless remark about good luck, but it should never be thus jested with.

When a heart has been in great spiritual storms and has at last found peace, there will follow as a duty and a privilege the acknowledgment of the Lord's mercy before his people, and it is well that this should be done in the presence of those who hold office in the church, and who from their riper years are better able to appreciate the testimony.

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water springs into dry ground;

34 A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

35 He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.

36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;

37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

38 He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

39 Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is* no way.

41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh *him* families like a flock.

42 The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

33. "*He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground.*" When the Lord deals with rebellious men he can soon deprive them of those blessings of which they feel most assured: their rivers and perennial springs they look upon as certain never to be taken from them, but the Lord at a word can deprive them even of these. In hot climates after long droughts streams of water utterly fail, and even springs cease to flow, and this also has happened in other parts of the world when great convulsions of the earth's surface have occurred. In providence this physical catastrophe finds its counterpart when business ceases to yield profit and sources of wealth are made to fail; as also when health and strength are taken away, when friendly aids are withdrawn, and comfortable associations are broken up. So, too, in soul matters, the most prosperous ministries may become dry, the most delightful meditations cease to benefit us, and the most fruitful religious exercises grow void of the refreshment of grace which they formerly yielded. Since

> "'Tis God who lifts our comforts high,
> Or sinks them in the grave,"

it behoves us to walk before him with reverential gratitude, and so to live that it may not become imperative upon him to afflict us.

34. "*A fruitful land into barrenness.*" This has been done in many instances, and notably in the case of the psalmist's own country, which was once the glory of all lands and is now almost a desert. "*For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*" Sin is at the bottom of sorrow. It first made the ground sterile in father Adam's day, and it continues to have a blighting effect upon all that it touches. If we have not the salt of holiness we shall soon receive the salt of barrenness, for the text in the Hebrew is—"a fruitful land into saltness." If we will not yield the Lord a harvest of obedience he may forbid the soil to yield us a harvest of bread, and what then? If we turn good into evil can we wonder if the Lord pays us in kind, and returns our baseness into our own bosoms? Many a barren church owes its present sad estate to its inconsistent behaviour, and many a barren Christian has come into this mournful condition by a careless, unsanctified walk before the Lord. Let not saints who are now useful run the risk of enduring the loss of their mercies, but let them be watchful that all things may go well with them.

35. "*He turneth the wilderness into a standing water.*" With another turn of his hand he more than restores that which in judgment he took away. He does his work of mercy on a royal scale, for a deep lake is seen where before there was only a sandy waste. It is not by natural laws, working by some innate force, that this wonder is wrought, but by himself—HE TURNETH. "*And dry ground into watersprings.*" Continuance, abundance, and perpetual freshness are all implied in watersprings, and these are created where all was dry. This wonder of mercy is the precise reversal of the deed of judgment, and wrought by the selfsame hand. Even thus in the church, and in each individual saint, the mercy of the Lord soon works wonderful changes where restoring and renewing grace begin their benign work. O that we might see this verse fulfilled in all around us, and within our own hearts: then would these words serve us for an exclamation of grateful astonishment, and a song of well deserved praise.

36. "*And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,*" where none could dwell before. They will appreciate the change and prize his grace; as the barrenness of the land caused their hunger so will its fertility banish it for ever, and they will settle down a happy and thankful people to bless God for every handful of corn which the land yields to them. None are so ready to return a revenue of praise to God for great mercies as those who have known the lack of them. Hungry souls make sweet music when the Lord fills them with his gracious gifts. Are we hungry? Or are we satisfied with the husks of this poor, swinish world? "*That they may prepare a city for habitation.*" When the earth is watered and men cultivate it, cities spring up and teem with inhabitants; when grace abounds where sin formerly reigned, hearts find peace and dwell in God's love as in a strong city. The church is built up where once all was a waste when the Lord causes the broad rivers and streams of gospel grace to flow forth.

37. "*And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.*" Men work when God works. His blessing encourages the sower, cheers the planter, and rewards the labourer. Not only necessaries but luxuries are enjoyed, wine as well as corn, when the heavens are caused to yield the needed rain to fill the watercourses. Divine visitations bring great spiritual riches, foster varied works of faith and labours of love, and cause every good fruit to abound to our comfort and to God's praise. When God sends the blessing it does not supersede, but encourages and develops human exertion. Paul plants, Apollos waters, and God gives the increase.

38. "*He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.*" God's blessing is everything. It not only makes men happy, but it makes men themselves, by causing men to be multiplied upon the earth. When the Lord made the first pair he blessed them and said, "be fruitful and multiply," and here he restores the primeval blessing. Observe that beasts as well as men fare well when God favours his people: they share with men in the goodness or severity of divine providence. Plagues and pests are warded off from the flock and the herd when the Lord means well towards a people: but when chastisement is intended, the flocks and herds rot from off the face of the earth. O that nations in the day of their prosperity would but own the gracious hand of God, for it is to his blessing that they owe their all.

39. "*Again they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.*" As they change in character, so do their circumstances alter. Under the old dispensation, this was very clearly to be observed; Israel's ups and downs were the direct consequences of her sins and repentances. Trials are of various kinds; here we have three words for affliction, and there are numbers more: God has many rods and we have many smarts, and all because we have many sins. Nations and churches soon diminish in number when they are diminished in grace. If we are low in love to God, it is small wonder that he brings us low in other respects. God can reverse the order of our prosperity, and give us a *diminuendo* where we had a *crescendo*; therefore let us walk before him with great tenderness of spirit, conscious of our dependence upon his smile.

40, 41. In these two verses we see how the Lord at will turns the wheel of providence. Paying no respect to man's imaginary grandeur, he puts princes down and makes them wander in banishment as they had made their captives wander when they drove them from land to land: at the same time, having ever a tender regard for the poor and needy, the Lord delivers the distressed and sets them in a position of comfort and happiness. This is to be seen upon the roll of history again and again, and in spiritual experience we remark its counterpart: the selfsufficient are made to despise themselves and search in vain for help in the wilderness of their nature, while poor convicted souls are added to the Lord's family and dwell in safety as the sheep of his fold.

42. "*The righteous shall see it, and rejoice.*" Divine providence causes joy to God's true people; they see the hand of the Lord in all things, and delight

to study the ways of his justice and of his grace. "*And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*" What can she say? God's providence is often so conclusive in its arguments of fact, that there is no replying or questioning. It is not long that the impudence of ungodliness can be quiet, but when God's judgments are abroad it is driven to hold its tongue.

43 Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

Those who notice providences shall never be long without a providence to notice. It is wise to observe what the Lord doth, for he is wonderful in counsel; has given us eyes to see with, and it is foolish to close them when there is most to observe; but we must observe wisely, otherwise we may soon confuse ourselves and others with hasty reflections upon the dealings of the Lord. In a thousand ways the lovingkindness of the Lord is shown, and if we will but prudently watch, we shall come to a better understanding of it. To understand the delightful attribute of lovingkindness is an attainment as pleasant as it is profitable: those who are proficient scholars in this art will be among the sweetest singers to the glory of Jehovah.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—Dr. Lowth, in his 20th prelection, remarks of this psalm:—"No doubt the composition of this psalm is admirable throughout; and the descriptive part of it adds at least its share of beauty to the whole; but what is most to be admired is its *conciseness*, and withal the expressiveness of the diction, which strikes the imagination with inimitable elegance. The *weary* and *bewildered traveller*, the miserable *captive* in the hideous dungeon, the sick and dying man, the *seaman foundering* in a storm, are described in so affecting a manner, that they far exceed anything of the kind, though never so much laboured. I may add that had such an Idyl appeared in Theocritus or Virgil or had it been found as a scene in any of the Greek tragedians, even in Æschylus himself, it would probably have been produced as their master-piece. —*Adam Clarke.*

Whole Psalm.—I do not believe that the special care of God over his own people is here rather *indirectly* than *directly* touched upon, and that therefore this Psalm is composed to illustrate the general care of God: 1. Because the subjects of the various deliverances are called *the redeemed of Jehovah*, verse 2, which is the customary title of the people of God. 2, Because among the instances given, there are those which are peculiar to the people of God, as in verse 3 the return of the dispersed out of every part of the globe, a singular blessing, promised in the prophecies to the people of God, see Ps. cvi. 47. 3, The sick of verse 17 are those who are spiritually sick even unto death, as is clear from the fact of their being healed by the *word* of God; which is not in the order of common providence. The *imprisoned* of verse 2 are those who on account of the worship of God fall into the power of their enemies, which you cannot well apply to any other than the people of God. If you understand the *wicked*, for others among the heathen cannot be said to be thrust into prison on account of the violation of the laws, then the *liberation* belongs not to them. 4, *Calling* upon God, especially upon *Jehovah*, under which name He was known only to his people, you cannot apply unless in a diluted and partial sense to those who are afflicted in the general cause of providence. . . . 5, He commands those who are delivered to celebrate the divine goodness in *the congregation of the people and the assembly of the elders*, verse 32,

which is the mark of the true Church and her usual description. 6, Lastly, instances of general providences are not wont to come under the name of חסד, *grace*, by which these deliverances are described, not do they require such great and such careful attention in their consideration, as here the sacred poet enjoins upon the pious and the wise: such things are easily observed, and are of every day occurrence.—*Venema.*

Whole Psalm.—The psalm divides itself into five parts; the four first, as it should seem, describing four divisions of the returning Israelites, and recounting the particular accidents that had befallen each party on their journey, and the particular mercies for which they ought to be thankful. The fifth part describes what befalls the collected nations, or a part of them, when they arrive at the land which was the object of their journey—I think the first restoration or colonization before the general gathering. Whether the four divisions of travellers are supposed to come exactly from the four distinct quarters of the earth, perhaps is not quite certain. The first divisions are plainly described (verses 4, 5), as coming across the desert, and meeting with all the disasters usual on that route.—*John Fry.*

Whole Psalm.—Without insisting on an exclusive application of this psalm to Israel, there may be traced, I think, not indistinctly, the leading incidents of the nation's changeful experience in the descriptive language of the narrative part.

In verses 4—7 the story of the wilderness is briefly told, to the praise of the glory of his grace who satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. The strong discipline of national affliction which visited the rebellious house, until the turning again of their captivity, when the appointed term of Babylonish exile was accomplished, appears to form the historical groundwork of verses 10—16; but in its prophetic intention this passage would demand a far wider interpretation. The resuscitation of Israel, both spiritually and politically, would alone adequately fulfil these words.

The sufferings of the "foolish nation" when, filled with Jehovah's indignation they find a snare in that which should have fed them, and pine beneath the pressure of a more grievous famine than that of bread, until, in answer to their cry of sorrow, the word of saving health is sent them from above, seem to be indicated in the next division (verses 17—20). The language of verse 22 is in agreement with this. They who had daily gone about to establish their own righteousness are called on now to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and to declare his works with singing.

Besides the obvious force and beauty of the following verses (23—30) in their simple meaning and their general application, we have, I believe, a figure of Jacob's restless trouble when, like a vexed and frightened mariner, he wandered up and down the wide sea of nations without ease, a friendless pilgrim of the Lord's displeasure, until the long-desired rest was gained at last, under the faithful guidance of him who seeks his people in the dark and cloudy day. Accordingly we find in the hortatory remembrancer of praise which follows (verse 32), a mention of the gathered people and their elders, who are now called on to celebrate, in the quiet resting-places of Immanuel's land, his faithful goodness and his might, who had turned their long-endured tempest of affliction to the calm sunshine of perpetual peace.—*Arthur Pridham, in* "*Notes and Reflections on the Psalms,*" 1869.

Verse 1.—"*O give thanks unto the* LORD." Unto no duty are we more dull and untoward, than to the praise of God, and thanksgiving unto him; neither is there any duty whereunto there is more need that we should be stirred up, as this earnest exhortation doth import.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"*For he is good,*" etc. The first words of the psalm are abundant in thought concerning Jehovah. "*For he is good.*" Is not this the Old Testament version of "*God is love*"? 1 John iv. 8. And then, "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Is not this the gushing stream from the fountain of Love?—

the never-failing stream, on whose banks "*the redeemed of the Lord*" *walk*, "*those whom he has redeemed from the hand of the enemy*" (Hengstenberg, "*hand of trouble,*" צָר). Nor is the rich significance of these clauses diminished by our knowing that they were, from time to time, the burden of the *altar-song*. When the ark came to its resting-place (1 Chron. xvi. 34), they sang to the Lord—"*For he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever!*" In Solomon's temple, the singers and players on instruments were making the resplendent walls of the newly-risen temple resound with these very words, when the glory descended (2 Chron. v. 13); and these were the words that burst from the lips of the awe-struck and delighted worshippers, who saw the fire descend on the altar (2 Chron. vii. 3). And in Ezra's days (iii. 11), again, as soon as the altar rose, they sang to the Lord—"*Because he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.*" Our God is known to be "Love," by the side of the atoning sacrifice. Jeremiah (xxxiii. 11) too, shows how restored Israel shall exult in this name.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"*His mercy endureth for ever.*" St. Paul assures us, that the covenant of grace, which is the fountain of all mercy, was made before the foundation of the world, and this he repeats in several of his epistles. The Psalmist teaches the same doctrine, and frequently calls upon us to thank God, because his mercy is for ever and ever—because his mercy is everlasting—and in the text, because "*his mercy endureth for ever;*" the word "*endureth*" is inserted by the translators, for there is no verb in the original neither in strictness of speech could there be any; because there was no time when this mercy was not exercised, neither will there be any time when the exercise of it will fail. It was begun before all worlds, when the covenant of grace was made, and it will continue to the ages of eternity, after this world is destroyed. So that *mercy* was, and is, and will be, "*for ever,*" and sinful miserable man may always find relief in this eternal mercy, whenever the sense of his misery disposes him to seek for it. And does not this motive loudly call upon us to "*give thanks*"? because there is mercy with God—mercy to pity the miserable—and even to relieve them—although they do not deserve it: for mercy is all free grace and unmerited love. Oh! how adorable, then, and gracious is this attribute! how sweet is it and full of consolation to the guilty.—*William Romaine* (1714—1795), *in* "*A Practical Comment on the Hundred and Seventh Psalm.*"

Verse 2.—"*Redeemed.*" Moses has given us in the law a clear and full idea of what we are to understand by the word *gal*, here rendered "*redeemed*" If any person was either sold for a slave or carried away for a captive, then his kinsman, who was nearest to him in blood, had the right and equity of redemption. But no other person was suffered to redeem. And such a kinsman was called "the redeemer," when he paid down the price for which his relation was sold to be a slave, or paid the ransom for which he was led captive. And there is another remarkable instance in the law, wherein it was provided, that in any case any person was found murdered, then the nearest to him in blood was to prosecute the murderer, and to bring him to justice, and this nearest relation thus avenging the murder is called by the same name, a *redeemer*. And how beautifully is the office of our great Redeemer represented under these three instances; he was to us such a Redeemer in spirituals, as these were in temporals: for sin had brought all mankind into slavery and captivity, and had murdered us. . . . This most high God, who was also man, united in one Christ, came into the world to redeem us, and the same person being both God and man, must merit for us as God in what he did for us as man. Accordingly, by the merits of his obedience and sufferings, he paid the price of our redemption, and we were no longer the servants of sin; and by his most precious blood shed upon the cross, by his death and resurrection, he overcame both death, and him who had the power of death, and by delivering us in this manner from slavery and captivity, he fulfilled the third part of the Redeemer's office: for Satan was the murderer from the beginning, who had

given both body and soul a mortal wound of sin, which was certain death and eternal misery, and the Redeemer came to avenge the murder. He took our cause in hand, as being our nearest kinsman, and it cost him his own life to avenge ours.—*William Romaine.*

Verse 2.—"*From the hand of the enemy.*" From all their sins which war against their souls; from Satan their implacable adversary, who is stronger than they; from the law, which threatens and curses them with damnation and death; from death itself, the last enemy, and indeed from the hand of all their enemies, be they who they may.—*John Gill.*

Verse 3.—"*And gathered.*" If anything can inspire us with gratitude, this motive should prevail, because we cannot but feel the force of it, as it reminds us of that misery from which we in particular were redeemed. The *Gentiles* had wandered from God, and were so lost and bewildered in the mazes of error and superstition, that nothing but the almighty love of our Lord Jesus could have gathered them together into one church.—*William Romaine.*

Verse 3.—"*Gathered them.*" The Syriac gives as the title of this psalm: God collects the Jews out of captivity, and brings them back out of Babylon; the only begotten Son of God also, Jesus Christ, collects the nations from the four corners of the world, by calling upon man to be baptized.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 3.—"*From the west.*" The mention of the *west* leads the psalmist's thoughts to Egypt; and the remembrance of the bondage and labours of the ancestors of the Israelites in Egypt, coupled with the description in a previous psalm (cv. 17) of the imprisonment of Joseph.—*Joseph Francis Thrupp.*

Verse 4.—"*They wandered,*" etc. In these words it is not easy to ascertain the persons immediately intended. But this is a circumstance not to be lamented. It is even an advantage; it constrains us to a more spiritual and evangelical interpretation of the subject. And thus the whole representation is fully and easily embodied. For the people of God are "*redeemed*"—redeemed from the curse of the law, the powers of darkness, and the bondage of corruption. They are "*gathered*"—gathered by his grace out of all the diversities of the human race; "out of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues." Whatever this world is to others, they find it to be "a wilderness"; when they are often tried, but their trials urge them to prayer, and prayer brings them relief. And being divinely *conducted*, they at length reach their destination: and this is the conclusion of the whole, and it applies to each of them: "*And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.*"—*William Jay.*

Verse 4.—"*Wandered.*" Their passage through the wilderness was not a journeying, such as when men pass on in a road to some inhabited place; but a *wandering* up and down away from all path and road, and so in an endless maze of desolation.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 4.—"*Wandered in the wilderness,*" etc. He has *lost his way.* When he was in the world, he had no difficulties; the path was so broad that he could not mistake it. But when the work of divine grace begins in a sinner's heart, he loses his way. He cannot find his way into the world; God has driven him out of it, as he drove Lot out of Sodom. He cannot find his way to heaven; because he at present lacks those clear testimonies, those bright manifestations whereby alone he can see his path. This is his experience then, that he has lost his way; having turned his back upon the world; and yet unable to realise those enjoyments in his soul that would make heaven his home. He has so lost his way, that whether he turns to the right hand or the left, he has no plain land-marks to show him the path in which his soul longs to go.

We need not stray from the text to find where the wanderer is. "They wandered *in the wilderness.*" The wilderness is a type and figure of what this life is to the Lord's people. There is nothing that grows in it fit for their food

or nourishment. In it the fiery flying serpents—sin and Satan—are perpetually biting and stinging them: and there is nothing in it that can give them any sweet and solid rest. The barren sands of carnality below, and the burning sun of temptation above, alike deny them food and shelter.

But there is a word added which throws a further light upon the character of the wilderness. "They wandered in the wilderness, *in a solitary way;*" a way not tracked; a path in which each has to walk alone; a road where no company cheers him, and without landmarks to direct his course. This is a mark peculiar to the child of God—that the path by which he travels is, in his own feelings, "*a solitary way.*" This much increases his exercises, that they appear peculiar to himself. His perplexities are such as he cannot believe any living soul is exercised with; the fiery darts which are cast into his mind by the Wicked One are such as he thinks no child of God has ever experienced: the darkness of his soul, the unbelief and infidelity of his heart, and the workings of his powerful corruptions, are such as he supposes none ever knew but himself. It is this walking "*in a solitary way,*" that makes the path of trial and temptation so painful to God's family.—*J. C. Philpot* (1802—1869), *in a Sermon entitled "The Houseless Wanderer."*

Verse 4.—"*In a solitary way.*"—The greater part of the desert being totally destitute of water is seldom visited by any human being: unless where the trading caravans trace out their toilsome and dangerous route across it. In some parts of this extensive waste the ground is covered with low, stunted shrubs, which serve as landmarks for the caravans, and furnish the camels with a scanty forage. In other parts, the disconsolate wanderer, wherever he turns, sees nothing around him but a vast interminable expanse of sand and sky: a gloomy and barren void, where the eye finds no particular object to rest upon, and the mind is filled with painful apprehensions of perishing with thirst. Surrounded by this dreary solitude, the traveller sees the dead bodies of birds, that the violence of the wind has brought from happier regions; and, as he ruminates on the fearful length of his remaining passage, listens with horror to the driving blast, the only sound that interrupts the awful repose of the desert.*—*Mungo Park*, 1771—1806 (?)

Verse 4.—"*In a solitary way.*" See the reason why people in trouble love solitariness. They are full of sorrow; and sorrow, if it have taken deep root, is naturally reserved, and flies all conversation. Grief is a thing that is very silent and private. Those people that are very talkative and clamorous in their sorrows, are never very sorrowful. Some are apt to wonder *why melancholy people delight to be so much alone*, and I will tell you the reason of it. 1. Because the disordered humours of their bodies alter their temper, their humours, and their inclinations, *that they are no more the same that they used to be;* their very distemper is averse to what is joyous and diverting; and they that wonder at them, may as wisely wonder why they will be diseased, which they would not be, if they knew how to help it: but the *disease of melancholy* is so obstinate, and so unknown to all but those who have it, that nothing but the power of God can totally overthrow it, and I know no other cure for it. 2. *Another reason why they choose to be alone*, is, because *people do not generally mind what they say*, nor believe them, but deride them, which they do not use so cruelly to do with those that are in other distempers; and no man is to be blamed for avoiding society, when it does not afford the common credit to his words, that is due to the rest of men. But, 3. Another, and the principal reason why people in trouble and sadness choose to be alone, is, because *they generally apprehend themselves singled out to be the marks of God's peculiar displeasure*, and they are often by their sharp afflictions a terror to themselves, and a wonder to others. It even breaks their hearts to see how low they are fallen, how oppressed, that were once as easy, as pleasant, as full of hope as others are, Job. vi. 21; "Ye see my casting down, and are afraid." Ps. lxxi.7;

* "Proceedings of the African Association."

"I am as a wonder unto many." And it is usually unpleasant to others to be with them. Ps. lxxxviii. 18; "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." And though it was not so with the friends of Job; to see a man whom they had once known happy, to be so miserable, one whom they had seen so very prosperous, to be so very poor, in such sorry, forlorn circumstances, did greatly affect them; he, poor man, was changed, they knew him not, Job ii. 12, 13: "And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great." As the prophet represents one under spiritual and great afflictions, that "he sitteth alone, and keepeth silence," Lam. iii. 28.—*Timothy Rogers* (1660—1729) *in "Trouble of Mind, and the Disease of Melancholy."*

Verse 4.—"*They found no city to dwell in*"; nor even to call at or lodge in, for miles together; which is the case of travellers in some parts, particularly in the desert of Arabia. Spiritual travellers find no settlement, rest, peace, joy, and comfort, but in Christ; nor any indeed in this world, and the things of it; here they have no continuing city, Hebrews xiii. 14.—*John Gill.*

Verse 5.—*Their soul fainted in them.*" The word here used, עָטַף, *ataph*, means properly to cover, to clothe, as with a garment, Ps. lxxiii. 6; or a field with grain, Ps. lxv. 13; then, to hide oneself, Job xxiii. 9; then to cover with darkness, Ps. lxxvii. 3; cii. *title*; thus it denotes the state of mind when darkness seems to be in the way—a way of calamity, trouble, sorrow; of weakness, faintness, feebleness. Here it would seem from the connexion to refer to the exhaustion produced by the want of food and drink.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 6.—"*Then they cried,*" etc. In these words we find three things remarkable: first, the condition of God's church and people, *trouble and distress:* Secondly, the practice and the exercise of God's people in this state: "*Then they cried unto the Lord*": Thirdly, their success, and the good issue of this practice: "*And he delivered them,*" etc.—*Peter Smith, in a Sermon preached before the House of Commons*, 1644.

Verse 6.—"*Then they cried.*" The root צָעַק has here a peculiar force: it denotes a cry of that kind into which any one, when shaken with a violent tempest of emotion, in the extremity of his grief and anxiety, breaks with a *crash* and with *complainings*, as the heavens send forth thunder and lightning. The original idea of the word being a *crash*, it indicates such complaints and cries as they send forth, who are oppressed by others, or are held fast in straits, in imploring public protection and help. See Deut. xxii. 24, 1 Kings xx. 39, Is. xix. 20.—*Venema.*

Verse 6.—"*In their trouble.*" Observe the words, "Then they cried unto the Lord *in* their trouble." Not *before*, nor *after*, but *in* it. When they were in the midst of it; when trouble was wrapped round their head, as the weeds were wrapped round the head of Jonah; when they were surrounded by it, and could see no way out of it; when, like a person in a mist, they saw no way of escape before or behind; when nothing but a dark cloud of trouble surrounded their souls, and they did not know that ever that cloud would be dispersed;—then it was that they cried.—*J. C. Philpot.*

Verse 6.—"*Trouble.*" "*Distresses.*" The condition of the Church, or its most usual lot, is to be under sorrows and afflictions. I say, most usual: "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made," Isai. lvii. 16. But as we say of the several callings and trades of life, this man professeth such a calling, and that man another; and as the poet said of Hermogenes, Though he hold his peace (peradventure being asleep) yet he's a good singer, and a musician by profession: so say I of the people of God, their trade of life is suffering:

and as Julian told the Christians, when they complained of his cruelty, '*Tis your profession to endure tribulation.—Peter Smith.*

Verse 7.—"*He led them forth.*" Forth out of the world—forth out of a profession—forth out of a name to live—forth out of every thing hateful in his holy and pure eyes.—*J. C. Philpot.*

Verse 7.—"*And he led them forth by the right way,*" etc. Alexander translates this verse—"*And he led them in a straight course, to go to a city of habitation*"; and adds, "No exact version can preserve or imitate the paronomasia arising from the etymological affinity of the first verb and noun, analogous to that between the English *walk* and *to walk*, though the Hebrew forms are only similar and not identical. The idea of physical rectitude or straightness necessarily suggests that of moral rectitude or honesty, commonly denoted by the Hebrew word."

Verse 7.—"*A city of habitation.*" Not a city of *inspection!* Many—(Eternal God, will it be any of this company?)—will look in; and "there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and they themselves shut out." Not a city of *visitation.* Christians shall not only enter, but abide. They shall go no more out—it is "a city of *habitation.*" This conveys the idea of *repose.* The Christian is now a traveller; then he will be a resident: he is now on the road; he will then be at home: "there remaineth a *rest* for the people of God." It reminds us of a *social state.* It is not a solitary condition; we shall partake of it with an innumerable company of angels, with all the saved from among men, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, our kindred in Christ. "These are fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God." It suggests *magnificence.* It is not a village, or a town, but a *city* of habitation. A city is the highest representation of civil community. There have been famous cities; but what are they all to this!—*William Jay.*

Verse 8.—*He does wonders for the children of men;* and therefore, men should *praise the Lord.* And he is the more to be praised because these wonders, נִפְלְאוֹת, *niphlaoth*, miracles of mercy and grace, are done for the *undeserving.* There are done לִבְנֵי אָדָם, *libney Adam*, for the children of *Adam*, the corrupt descendants of a rebel father.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 8.—"*Oh that men would praise the* LORD," etc. Hebrew, That they would confess it to the Lord, both in secret, and in society. This is all the rent that God requireth; he is content that we have the comfort of his blessings, so he may have the honour of them. This was all the fee Christ looked for for his cures: go and tell what God hath done for thee. Words seem to be a poor and slight recompense; but Christ, saith Nazienzen, called himself the Word.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 8.—"*To the children of men!*" We must acknowledge God's goodness to the children of men, as well as to the children of God; to others as well as to ourselves.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 9.—"*For he satisfieth the longing soul.*" This is the reason which the psalmist gives for the *duty* of thankfulness which he prescribes. "*The longing soul,*" נֶפֶשׁ שֹׁקֶקָה, *nephesh shokekah, the soul that pushes forward in eager desire* after salvation.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 10.—"*Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.*" Every son of Adam in his natural state before he is redeemed is in "*darkness*" and "*the shadow of death,*" and is fast "*bound*" with the chains of *sin* and *misery*, and there is no help for him upon earth—the Almighty God and Saviour alone is able to deliver him.—*William Romaine.*

Verse 11.—"*Because they rebelled against the words of God.*" There is in the Hebrew a play upon similar sounds—*Himru Imree.* God's *words* are those spoken in the *Law* and by *the prophets.* "*And contemned the counsel of the Most High*"—another play upon like sounds in the Hebrew—*Hatzath Naatzu.*—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 12.—"*He brought down their heart.*" O believer, God may see you have many and strong lusts to be subdued, and that you need many and sore afflictions to bring them down. Your pride and obstinacy of heart may be strong, your distempers deeply rooted, and therefore the physic must be proportioned to them.—*John Willison.*

Verse 12.—"*He brought down their heart with labour.*" Those towering passions by which they vainly vaunted themselves above the law and the worship of God, he weakened and curbed, so that they began to submit themselves to God. The root כָּנַע taken from the Arabic, describes a process of *weakening* by *compressing the wings* or shrinking the fingers, and is properly applied to *birds*, which when their wings are compressed are obliged to fall to the ground, or to men, who by the shrivelling up of their fingers lose the power of working; whence it is transferred to *oppressions* or *depressions* of any kind.—*Venema.*

Verse 12.—"*They fell down, and there was none to help.*" Affliction is then come to the height and its complete measure, when the sinner is made sensible of his own weakness, and doth see there is no help for him, save in God alone.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 12.—"*They fell down.*" They threw themselves prostrate at his feet for mercy; their heart and strength failed them, as the word signifies, and is used in Ps. xxxi. 10; terrified with a sense of divine wrath, they could not stand before the Lord, nor brave it out against him. "*And there was none to help.*" They could not help themselves, nor was there any creature that could. There is salvation in no other than in Christ; when he saw there was none to help him in that work, his own arm brought salvation to him; and when sinners see there is help in no other, they apply to him.—*John Gill.*

Verse 17.—"*Fools.*" There is nothing more foolish than an act of wickedness; there is no wisdom equal to that of obeying God.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 17—20.—"*Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat*" (they are so sick that they can relish, take down nothing,) and "*they draw near unto the gates of death,*" they are almost in, they were on the brink of hell; what course must be used for their cure? Truly this, "*He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*" No herb in the garden of the whole world can do these distressed creatures the least good. Friends may speak, and ministers may speak, yea, angels may speak, and all in vain; the wounds are incurable for all their words; but if God please to speak, the dying soul reviveth. This word is the only balm that can cure the wounded conscience: "he sendeth his word and healeth them." Conscience is God's prisoner, he claps it in hold, he layeth it in fetters, that the iron enters the very soul; this he doth by his word, and truly he only who shuts up can let out; all the world cannot open the iron gate, knock off the shackles, and set the poor prisoner at liberty, till God speak the word.—*George Swinnock*, 1627—1673.

Verse 18.—"*Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat.*" Nor is it without emphasis that it is not the sick man who is said to spurn food, but *his soul.* . . . The Hebrew word נֶפֶשׁ which properly means a breath, hence a panting appetite, is applied to a *very vehement appetite* for food. When, therefore, the *soul* is said *to abhor food*, it is equivalent to saying *for the vehement appetite for food abhors food:* that is, in the place of an appetite for food, they are oppressed with a loathing; when they ought to be moved with a sharp desire of food, that

their exhausted powers might be refreshed, appetite itself becomes a *loathing of food*, which is a most vivid description of the utmost loathing, and utter prostration of all desire.—*Venema.*

Verse 18.—"*Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat.*" The best of creature-comforts are but vain comforts. What can dainty meat do a man good, when he is sick and ready to die? Then gold and silver, lands and houses, which are the dainty meat of a covetous man, are loathsome to him. When a man is sick to death, his very riches are sapless and tasteless to him; wife and children, friends and acquaintance, can yield but little comfort in that dark hour, yea, they often prove miserable comforters: when we have most need of comfort, these things administer least or no comfort at all to us. Is it not our wisdom, then, to get a stock of such comforts, as will hold and abide fresh with us, when all worldly comforts either leave us, or become tasteless to us? Is it not good to get a store of that food, which how sick soever we are, our stomachs will never loathe? yea, the sicker we are, our stomachs will the more like, hunger after, and feed the more heartily upon. *The flesh of Christ is meat indeed* (John vi. 55). Feed upon him by faith, in health and sickness, ye will never loathe him. His flesh is the true meat of desires, such meat as will fill and fatten us, but never cloy us. A hungry craving appetite after Christ, and sweet satisfaction in him, are inseparable, and still the stronger is our appetite, the greater is our satisfaction. And (which is yet a greater happiness) our souls will have the strongest appetite, the most sharp-set stomach after Christ, when, through bodily sickness, our stomachs cannot take down, but loathe the very scent and sight of the most pleasant perishing meat, and delicious earthly dainties. Look, that ye provide somewhat to eat, that will go down upon a sick-bed; your sick-bed meat is Christ; all other dainty food may be an abhorring to you.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 18.—"*Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat.*" The case is then growing desperate, and there seems to be no hope left, when it comes to the last stage here described, *viz.*, to *loathe and "abhor all manner of meat.*" The stomach turns at the sight of it, and the man has this loathing and abhorrence of "*all manner of meat.*" What he most loved, and had the best appetite for, is now become so very offensive, that at the smell of it he grows sick and faints away. Nature cannot support itself long under this disorder. If this loss of appetite, and loathing even the smell of the most simple food continue, it must wear the patient out. Indeed, it is not always a mortal distemper; there may be an entire loathing of food, and even fainting away at the smell of it, and the patient may sometimes recover; but in the present case the distemper had continued so long, and was grown so inveterate that there were no hopes, for "*they draw nigh,*" the Psalmist says, "*to the gates of death.*" Those gates of brass and bars of iron with which death locks up his prisoners in the grave: and you may judge how great must be the strength of these gates and bars, since only one person was ever able to break through them, and if he had not been more than man, he could never have broken these gates of brass, nor cut these bars of iron in sunder.—*William Romaine.*

Verse 18.—"*They draw near unto the gates of death.*" Death is a great commander, a great tyrant, and hath gates to sit in, as judges and magistrates used to 'sit in the gates.' There are three things implied in this phrase. 1. First, "*They draw near unto the gates of death,*" that is, they were "*near to death*"; as he that draws near the gates of a city is near the city, because the gates enter into the city. 2. Secondly, gates are applied to death *for authority.* They were almost in death's jurisdiction. Death is a great tyrant. He rules over all the men in the world, over kings and potentates, and over mean men; and the greatest men fear death most. He is "the king of fears," as Job calls him, Job xviii. 14; ay, and the fear of kings. . . . . Therefore it is called "the gate of death." It rules and overrules all mankind. Therefore it is said "to reign," Rom. v. 21. Death and sin came in together. Sin was the gate that let in death, and ever since death reigned, and will, till Christ perfectly triumph over

it, who is the King of that lord and commander, and hath "the key of hell and death," Rev. i. 18. To wicked men, I say, he is a tyrant, and hath a gate; and when they go through the "*gate of death*," they go to a worse, to a lower place, to hell. It is the trap-door to hell. 3. Thirdly. By the "*gate of death*," is meant not only the authority, but *the power of death*; as in the gospel, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 18; that is, the power and strength of hell. So here it implies the strength of death, which is very great, for it subdues all. It is the executioner of God's justice.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 20.—When George Wishart arrived at Dundee, where the plague was raging [1545], he caused intimation to be made that he would preach; and for that purpose chose his station upon the head of the East-gate, the infected persons standing without, and those that were whole within. His text was Psalm cvii. 20, "*He sent his word and healed them*," etc., wherein he treated of the profit and comfort of God's word, the punishment that comes by contempt of it, the readiness of God's mercy to such as truly turn to him, and the happiness of those whom God takes from this misery, etc. By which sermon he so raised up the hearts of those that heard him, that they regarded not death, but judged them more happy that should then depart, rather than such as should remain behind, considering that they knew not whether they should have such a comforter with them.—*Samuel Clarke* (1599—1682), *in* "*A General Martyrologie.*"

Verse 20.—"*He sent his word.*" The same expression occurs in cxlvii. 15, 18; comp. Is. lv. 11. We detect in such passages the first glimmering of St. John's doctrine of the agency of the personal Word. The Word by which the heavens were made, xxxiii. 6, is seen to be not merely the expression of God's will, but his messenger mediating between himself and his creatures. It is interesting to compare with this the language of Elihu in the parallel passage of Job xxxiii. 23, where what is here ascribed to the agency of the Word is ascribed to that of the "mediating angel, or messenger."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 20.—"*His word*" who "*healed them*" was his essential Word, even the second person in the Godhead, our Lord Jesus Christ, the word who was made flesh and dwelt among us: of this divine Word it was foretold in the Old Testament, that he should arise with the glory of the morning sun, bringing healing in his wings for all our maladies; and accordingly the New Testament relates, that Jesus went about all Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing ALL manner of sickness, and ALL manner of disease among the people. He healed the bodily disease miraculously, to prove that he was the Almighty Physician of the soul. And it is remarkable that he never rejected any person who applied to him for an outward cure, to demonstrate to us, that he would never cast out any person who should apply to him for a spiritual cure.—*William Romaine.*

Verse 20.—"*And delivered them from their destructions.*" From their pits: or, From their sepulchres. That is, from the deaths to which they were near. Others render, From their nets or snares. Others, *their destructions*, the diseases in which they were miserable prisoners.—*Franciscus Vatablus.*

Verse 20.—"*And delivered them from their destructions.*" From the destruction of the body, of the beauty and strength of it by diseases; restoring to health is a redeeming of the life from destruction; from the grave, the pit of corruption and destruction, so called because in it bodies corrupt, putrefy, and are destroyed by worms; and such who are savingly convinced of sin, and blessed with pardoning grace and mercy, are delivered from the everlasting destruction of body and soul in hell.—*John Gill.*

Verse 22.—"*And let them sacrifice.*" For their *healing* they should bring a *sacrifice*; and they should offer the *life* of the innocent animal unto God, as he

has offered their *lives;* and let them thus *confess* that God has spared *them* when they deserved to die; and let them "*declare*" also "his works with rejoicing"; for who will not rejoice when he is delivered from death?—*Adam Clarke.*

As a specimen of mediæval spiritualizing we give the following from the Hermit of Hampole:—

Verse 23.—"*They that go down to the sea in ships,*" etc. *They that* (are true prelates and preachers,) *go down* from the sublimity of contemplation, *to the sea*, that is, suiting themselves to the lowly, that they also may be saved, *in ships*, that is, in the faith, hope and charity of the church, without which they would be drowned in the waters of pleasure, *that do business*, that is, continue preaching, *in great waters*, that is, among many people in order that they may become fishers of men.—*Richardus Hampolitanus.*

Verses 23—27.

While thus our keels still onward boldly strayed—
Now tossed by tempest, now by calms delayed;
To tell the terrors of the deep untried,
What toils we suffered, and what storms defied;
What rattling deluges the black clouds poured,
What dreary weeks of solid darkness low'red;
What mountain surges mountain surges lashed,
What sudden hurricanes the canvas dashed;
What bursting lightnings, with incessant flare,
Kindled in one wide flame the burning air;
What roaring thunders bellowed o'er our head,
And seemed to shake the reeling ocean's bed:
To tell each horror in the deep revealed,
Would ask an iron throat with tenfold vigour steeled.
Those dreadful wonders of the deep I saw,
Which fill the sailor's breast with sacred awe;
And what the sages, of their learning vain,
Esteem the phantoms of a dreamful brain.

Luiz de Camoens (1524—1579), *in* "*the Lusiad.*"

Verses 23—31.—No language can be more sublime than the description of a storm at sea in this Psalm. It is the very soul of poetry. The utmost simplicity of diction is employed to convey the grandest thoughts. The picture is not crowded; none but the most striking circumstances are selected: and everything is natural, simple, and beyond measure interesting. The whole is an august representation of the Providence of God, ruling in what appears the most ungovernable province of nature. It is God who raises the storm; it is God who stilleth it. The wise men of this world may look no farther than the physical laws by which God acts; but the Holy Spirit, by the Psalmist, views the awful conflict of the elements as the work of God.—*Alexander Carson.*

Verses 23—32.—This last picture springs naturally from the mention in verse 3 of the sea; and here the psalmist may have directed his imagination to the usual tempestuousness of the season at which the psalm was sung.—*Joseph Francis Thrupp.*

Verse 24.—"*These see the works of the* LORD." There are sinners who, like Jonah, fleeing from the face of God, go down to the sea, to the cares and pleasures of the world, away from the solid land of humility, quiet, and grace. They occupy themselves in many waters, in needless toils and excessive pleasures, and yet even there God does not leave them, but causes them to see his works and wonders even in the deep of their sins, by giving them timely and sufficient warnings, and alarming them with fear of the abyss.—*Le Blanc, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verses 25—31.

Think, O my soul, devoutly think,
How, with affrighted eyes
Thou saw'st the wide extended deep
In all its horrors rise!

Confusion dwelt in every face,
And fear in every heart;
When waves on waves, and gulfs on gulfs,
O'ercame the pilot's art.

Yet then from all my griefs, O Lord,
Thy mercy set me free,
Whilst in the confidence of prayer
My soul took hold on thee.

For though in dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave,
I knew thou wert not slow to hear,
Nor impotent to save.

The storm was laid, the winds retired,
Obedient to thy will;
The sea that roared at thy command,
At thy command was still.

In midst of dangers, fears, and death,
Thy goodness I'll adore,
And praise thee for thy mercies past;
And humbly hope for more.

My life, if thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be;
And death, if death must be my doom,
Shall join my soul to thee.

Joseph Addison.

Verse 26.—"*They mount up to the heaven.*" There be three heavens. 1. *Cœlum aërium.* 2. *Cœlum astriferum.* 3. *Cœlum beatorum.* It is not the latter now they go to in storms, but the two former.—*Daniel Pell*, in "*An Improvement of the Sea*," 1659.

Verse 26.—"*They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths.*"

To larboard all their oars and canvas bend;
We on a ridge of waters to the sky
Are lifted, down to Erebus again
Sink with the falling wave; thrice howl'd the rocks
Within their stony caverns, thrice we saw
The splash'd-up foam upon the lights of heaven.

Virgil.

Verse 28.—"*They cry unto the* LORD." His attributes are much honoured in calling upon him, especially in times of danger and distresses. 1. When you call upon God at sea, you honour his *sovereignty*. God says to these proud waves, "So far and no farther!" So, "the storm and hail," they fulfil his will, and when he pleases he commands a calm. 2. Prayer in time of danger honours God's *wisdom*, when we see no way open for mercies and deliverance to come in at, then to look up to him, believing, "He knows how to deliver out of temptation." O how much of the wisdom of God appears in preservation in time of danger! and is it not a good token of mercy coming in when persons pray, though all visible ways are blocked up? This honours God's *wisdom*, which we acknowledge is never at a loss as to ways of bringing in mercy and deliverance. 3. The *faithfulness* of God is much honoured in times of danger, when he is called upon. The faithfulness of a friend doth most appear in a strait: now if you can rely upon his promise, God's faithfulness is the best line men sinking at sea can lay hold on. So I might add, calling upon God honours all his other attributes. *John Ryther* (1632—1681) *in* "*A Plat for Mariners; or, The Seaman's Preacher*," 1675.

Verse 28.—"*Then they cry.*" Tempestuous storms and deadly dangers have brought those upon their knees, that would never had bended in a calm: "*Then they cry.*" If any one would know at what time the sailors take up the duty of prayer, let me say it is when death stares them in the face. If ever you see the heavens veiled in sable blackness, the clouds flying, and the winds roaring under them; you may conclude that some of them (though God knows but few) are at prayer, yea, hard at it with their God. But never believe it that there is any prayer amongst them when the skies are calm, the winds down, and the seas smooth. David tells you not of their praying in good and comfortable weather, but that it is in time of storms, for I believe that neither he nor I ever saw many of them on that strain. . . . .

God hears oftener from an afflicted people, than he either does or can from a people that are at ease, quiet, and out of danger. "*Then they cry.*" The prodigal son was very high, and resolved never to return till brought low by pinching and nipping afflictions, then his father had some tidings of him. Hagar was proud in Abraham's house, but humbled in the wilderness. Jonah was asleep in the ship, but awake and at prayer in the whale's belly, Jonah ii. 1. Manasses lived in Jerusalem like a libertine, but when bound in chains at Babel, his heart was turned to the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, 12. Corporal diseases forced many under the gospel to come to Christ, whereas others that enjoyed bodily health would not acknowledge him. One would think that the Lord would abhor to hear those prayers that are made only out of the fear of danger, and not out of the love, reality, and sincerity of the heart. If there had not been so many miseries of blindness, lameness, palsies, fevers, etc., in the days of Christ, there would not have been that flocking after him.—*Daniel Pell.*

Verse 28.—"*Then they cry unto the* LORD." "*Then*," if ever: hence that speech of one, *Qui nescit orare, discat navigare*, He that cannot pray, let him go to sea, and there he will learn.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 28.—"*Then they cry*," etc. Gods of the sea and skies (for what resource have I but prayer?) abstain from rending asunder the joints of our shattered bark.—*Ovid.*

Verse 29.—"*He maketh the storm a calm*," etc. The image is this. Mankind before they are redeemed are like a ship in a stormy sea, agitated with passions, tossed up and down with cares, and so blown about with various temptations, that they are never at rest. This is their calmest state in the smiling day of smooth prosperity: but afflictions will come, the afflictions of sin and Satan, and the world will raise a violent storm, which all the wit and strength of man cannot escape. He will soon be swallowed up of the devouring waves: unless that same God who created the sea speak to it, "Peace, be still." We are all in the same situation the apostles were, when they were alone in the evening in the midst of the sea, and the wind and the waves were contrary; against which they toiled rowing in vain, until Christ came to them walking upon the sea, and commanded the winds to cease and the waves to be still. Upon which there was a great calm; for they knew his voice, who had spoken them into being, and they obeyed. His word is almighty to compose and still the raging war of the most furious elements. And he is as almighty in the spiritual world, as he is in the natural. Into whatever soul he enters, he commands all the jarring passions to be still, and there is indeed a blessed calm. O may the Almighty Saviour speak thus unto you all, that you may sail on a smooth unruffled sea, until you arrive safe at the desired haven of eternal rest!—*William Romaine.*

Verse 29.—If the sailor can do nothing so wise and oftentimes indeed can do nothing else than trust in the Lord, so is it with us in the storms of life. Like the mariner, we must use lawful means for our protection; but what are means without the divine blessing?—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 30.—"*Desired haven.*" At such a time as this sweet April morning,

indeed, a breakwater like this [of Portland] may seem of little value, when the waves of the ocean only just suffice to break its face into gems of changing brilliance, and to make whispering music; while vessels of all sizes, like those whose clustering masts we see yonder under the promontory, ride with perfect security in the open road. But in the fierce gales of November or March, when the shrieking blasts drive furiously up the Channel, and the huge mountain billows, green and white, open threatening graves on every side, how welcome would be a safe harbour, easy of access, and placed at a part of the coast which else would be unsheltered for many leagues on either side! Blessed be God for the gift of his beloved Son, the only Harbour of Refuge for poor tempest-tossed sinners! We may think lightly of it now, but in the coming day of gloom and wrath, when "the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow," they only will escape who are sheltered there!—*Philip Henry Gosse, in "The Aquarium,"* 1856.

Verse 31.—"*Oh.*" This verse seems to include the ardent earnestness of the psalmist's spirit, that seamen would be much in thankfulness, and much and frequent in praising of the Lord their deliverer out of all their distresses. "*Oh,*" seems he to say, that I could put men upon this duty, it would be more comfortable to me, seems the psalmist to say, to find such a principle in the hearts of those that are employed in the great waters, than any one thing in the world again whatsoever. "*Oh*" is but a little word consisting of two letters, but no word that ever man utters with his tongue comes with that force and affection from the heart as this doth. "*Oh*" is a word of the highest expression, a word when a man can say no more. This interjection oftentimes starts out of the heart upon a sudden from some unexpected conception, or admiration, or other.—*Daniel Pell.*

Verse 33.—"*He turneth rivers into a wilderness,*" etc. God is *the father of showers.* If he withholds that refreshment for a long time, all nature droops, and every green thing dies. The imagery is drawn from Palestine where there were but two annual rainy seasons, and if either of them was long deferred, the effect was frightful. The channels of considerable rivers were dried up.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 33.—"*Rivers*" . . . "*Watersprings.*" A church enriched with the graces of heaven is compared by the prophets to a well-watered garden (Isai. lviii. 11; Jer. xxxi. 12), to the paradise of God, watered with its four fruitful rivers: for as everything useful and ornamental in the vegetable world is raised up by water, so is everything in the spiritual world raised up by the Holy Spirit.—*William Romaine.*

Verse 34.—"*A fruitful land into barrenness.*" Hereof Judæa is at this day a notable instance (besides many parts of Asia, and Africa, once very fruitful, now, since they became Mahometan, dry and desert). Judæa, saith one, hath now only some few parcels of rich ground found in it; that men may guess the goodness of the cloth by the fineness of the shreds.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 34.—"*For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*" When I meet with a querulous husbandman, he tells me of a churlish soil, of a wet seed-time, of a green winter, of an unkindly spring, of a lukewarm summer, of a blustering autumn; but I tell him of a displeased God, who will be sure to contrive and fetch all seasons and elements, to his own most wise drifts and purposes.—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 34.—"*For the wickedness.*" God locketh up the clouds, because we have shut up our mouths. The earth is grown hard as iron to us, because we have hardened our hearts against our miserable neighbours. The cries of the poor for bread are loud, because our cries against sin have been so low. Sicknesses run apace from house to house, and sweep away the poor unprepared inhabitants, because we sweep not out the sin that breedeth them—*Richard Baxter,* 1615—1691.

Verse 35.—"*Dry ground into watersprings.*" If God afflict, his justice findeth the cause of it in man: but if he do good to any man, it is of his own good pleasure, without any cause in man: therefore no reason is given here of this change, as was of the former, but simply, "*He turneth dry ground into watersprings.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 40.—"*He poureth contempt upon princes.*" Mighty potentates, who have been the terror and dread of the whole world, when once denuded of their dignity and power, have become the sport even of their own dependants.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 40.—"*Princes.*" Persons of high rank are the most exempt, in ordinary times, from destitution and want, and misery must reach a great height when it invades them. No part of the world probably has witnessed so many and great reverses of this kind as the regions and countries of the East.—*William Walford.*

Verse 41.—"*He setteth the poor on high from affliction.*" How high? Above the reach of the curse, which shall never touch him; above the power of Satan, which shall never ruin him; above the reigning influence of sin, which "shall not have dominion over him"; above the possibility of being banished from his presence, for "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." This is the way God sets his people on high, instructing them in the mysteries of his word, and giving them to partake the joys that are contained therein.—*Joseph Irons*, 1786—1852.

Verse 42.—"*The righteous shall see it.*" The word here rendered "*righteous*" is not what the Scripture commonly uses to signify righteous or justified persons; but it is another word, and conveys another idea. It signifies to *direct*, to *set right;* and the "*righteous*" here mentioned are they, who are directed in the right way, and walk, as Enoch did, with God in his way, and not in the way of the world. And these "*shall see*" the goodness and mercy of God's dealings with the fallen race of man. They shall have eyes to see the ways of his providence. The same grace which set them right, will manifest to them the reasonableness of the plan of redemption. They shall see and admire, and be thankful for the wonders of his redeeming love, which are recorded in this divine hymn.—*William Romaine.*

Verse 42.—"*All iniquity shall stop her mouth.*" "*Iniquity*" is here personified, and denotes the *iniquitous;* but the abstract is more poetical, "*Stop her mouth.*" *Tongue tied*, literally, *mouth-shut;* which, perhaps, might be not improperly vernaculized.—*Alexander Geddes.*

Verse 43.—"*Whoso is wise,*" etc. Or as it may be read interrogatively, "*Who is wise?*" as in Jer. ix. 12; Hosea xiv. 9; that is, spiritually wise, wise unto salvation; who is made to know wisdom in the hidden part; for not such as are possessed of natural wisdom, or worldly-wise men, much less who are wise to do evil, are here meant. "*And will observe these things;*" the remarkable appearances of divine Providence to persons in distress; the various changes and vicissitudes in the world; the several afflictions of God's people, and their deliverances out of them; the wonderful works of God in nature, providence, and grace; these will be observed, taken notice of, laid up in the mind, and kept by such who are truly wise, who know how to make a right use and proper improvement of them. "*Even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the* LORD"; every one of the wise men; they will perceive the kindness of God unto men, in the several dispensations of his providence towards them, and his special love and kindness towards his own people, even in all their afflictions they will perceive this to be at the bottom of every mercy and blessing; they will understand more of the nature and excellency of it, and know more of the love of God and Christ, which passeth knowledge. Or, *the kindnesses of the*

Lord shall be understood; that is, by wise men; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra renders the words.—*John Gill.*

Verse 43.—"*Will observe these things,*" etc. Will carefully note and remark what is here said of the fall and recovery of mankind, of our state by nature and by grace. True wisdom consists in observing these two things, what we are in ourselves, and what we are in Christ; in a deep sense of our misery by sin, stirring us up to seek our remedy in the Redeemer. This is wisdom. And whosoever is thus wise unto salvation "*shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord;*" shall be able to apply what he understands of it to his own private use and benefit. The verb in the original rendered "*shall understand,*" is in the conjugation called *Hithpael*, which signifies to act upon itself. Whosoever observes those things properly finds his own interest in them. He makes the understanding of them useful to himself. He does not study them as a science or theory, but as interesting points in which he is nearly concerned, and which he therefore tries to bring home for his own private advantage. When he hears of the mercies of the Lord Jesus recorded in this psalm he desires to partake of them. When he hears of the great deliverances vouchsafed to sinful ruined man, he studies to have his own share in them. What is said of these persons who wandered out of the way in the wilderness, and fell into the bondage of sin, and were afflicted with its diseases, and troubled like a stormy sea, with its continual tempests; all this he knows was his own case, and therefore what follows of their flourishing state after Christ delivered them may be his also if he cry unto the Lord, as they did, for help. And he never ceases praying and seeking, until the blessed Jesus brings him to the haven of the church, where he would be. And if he find the church diminished and brought low, he is not discouraged; but relies on the promises of his God, who will set him on high out of the reach of public calamity, when he comes to destroy an infidel church. He observes what is said on this psalm concerning those things; and he knows it to be true, by his own experience. And therefore the lovingkindness of the Lord here recorded is to him a subject of exceeding great joy, because he has tasted of it. Whoso is wise will bring his knowledge of this psalm home to his own heart, and he shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord, he shall be able to apply what he understands to his own benefit, and shall therefore be continually praising the Lord for his goodness, and declaring the wonders which he hath done for the salvation of men.—*William Romaine.*

Verse 43.—"*Observe these things.*" "*To observe,* signifieth not only with our eyes to behold it; but so to stir up our minds to the consideration of a thing, that one may grow the better by it," saith a grave author. Now in this notion of it, how few are they that observe "*these things*"? . . . .

If you would by observing the providence of God understand his lovingkindness, and gain a spiritual wisdom, *let your eye affect your heart.* Mollerus telleth us, such an observation is here intended *unde ad pietatem excitemur, ut inde meliores evadamus,* "as will quicken us to piety, and help to make us better." There are many careless observers of providence, who indeed see *events* rather than providences; they see much that comes to pass in the world, but consider nothing of God in them. . . . They do by the book of providence, as Augustine complained of himself, that in his unregenerate state he did by the book of Scripture; he rather brought to it *disputiendi acumen,* than *discendi pietatem.* So men bring to the great works of God rather an acute eye and wit to find out the immediate causes, and reasons natural and political, than a *trembling, humble heart,* that they might learn by them more to acknowledge, *love, fear, adore,* and revere the great and mighty God whose works these are. Let not yours be such an observation; but let your eye, beholding God in his providential dispensations, affect your hearts with that adoration and veneration, that love and fear of the great and mighty God, which such works of God do call to you for.—*John Collinges* (1623–1690), *in* "*Several Discourses concerning the actual Providence of God.*"

Verse 43.—"*Observe these things.*" These mighty doings of our Saviour and

our God in delivering his feeble creatures from the trackless wilderness of error,—from the noisome chain of carnal lust,—from the deadly sickness of a corrupt nature,—and from the wild tempest of earthly passion, deserve the thoughtful joy of all who would be faithful servants of their Lord. The mouth of unbelief and the excuses of iniquity are stopped by the sight of the marvels of that mercy which endureth for ever. "The accuser of the brethren" is silenced and cast down. The truly wise will ponder these things, for in the knowledge of them is true wisdom; and so pondering, there shall open before them, ever plainer, fuller, clearer, brighter, the revelation of that mighty love of their eternal Father which surpasses all understanding, and is vaster than all thought.—"*Plain Commentary.*"

Verse 43.—How great a volume might be wrote, *de observandis Providentiæ*, concerning the observable things of Divine Providence. I have seen a picture (one of those you call kitchen-pieces, concerning which it hath been proposed to me, that for so many hours I should view it as curiously as I could; yet the proposer would for any wager undertake to show me something in it which I did not observe. Truly Providence is such a thing, I can never look upon it, I can never take the motions of it into my thoughts, but some new observation tendereth itself into my thoughts, I must turn my eyes from this wonderful work, for I see they will not be satisfied with seeing, my mind will never be filled with observation.—*John Collinges.*

Verse 43.—When we speak of the love and favour of God to his people, we are prone to understand by it nothing but pleasing providences, grateful to our senses: now the "*lovingkindness*" of God is not only seen in pleasing dispensations, but in adverse providences also: "Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every child whom he receiveth": "all things are yours," saith the apostle. This knowledge must be gained by *observation.*—*John Collinges.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Whole Psalm.—This psalm is like the Interpreter's house in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Pilgrim is told that he will there see excellent and profitable things. The same promise is given in the introduction to this psalm, where we have, I. The source of these excellent things—the goodness and all-enduring mercy of God; mercy not exhausted by the unworthiness of its objects. II. Their acknowledgment, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Men will not own it, but the redeemed of the Lord will. It is the experience of such that is pictorially represented in this psalm. Let every one speak of God as he finds. Is he good when he takes away as well as when he gives? "The redeemed of the Lord will say so." Is he merciful when he frowns as well as when he smiles? "The redeemed of the Lord say so." Does he make all things work together for good to them that love him? "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." III. Their end. Praise and thanksgiving: "Oh give," etc. 1, For general mercies; 2, for redemption; 3, for special deliverances.—*G. R.*

Verses 1, 2.—The duty of praise is universal, the real presentation of it remains with the redeemed. Particular redemption should lead to special praise, special testimony to truth and special faith in God: "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

Verse 3.—The ingathering of the chosen. I. All wandered. II. Their ways different. III. All observed of the Lord. IV. All brought to Jesus as to one centre. Note ways, and times of gathering.

Verse 4.—Wandering Jews. Illustrate the roaming of a mind in search of truth, peace, love, purity, etc.

Verses 4—10.—The words contain a brief history of man's fall and misery

and of his restoration by Jesus Christ; which are described under these particulars. I. The lost state of men by nature. II. They are brought to a right sense of it, and cry to the Lord Jesus for deliverance. III. He hears them and delivers them out of all their distresses. IV. The tribute of thanks due to him for this great deliverance.—*W. Romaine.*

Verse 5.—Spiritual hunger the cause of faintness. Necessity of feeding the soul.

Verse 7.—Divine grace stimulating our exertions. "He led them forth . . . that they might go."

Verse 8.—He who has enjoyed God's help should mark, 1, in what distress he has been; 2, how he has called to God; 3, how God has helped him; 4, what thanks he has returned; and, 5, what thanks he is yet bound to render.—*Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 9.—A great general fact. The condition, the benefactor, the blessing—"goodness," the result—"satisfieth." Then the further result of praise as seen in verse 8.

Verses 12,13.—I. The convicted soul's abject condition—humbled, exhausted, prostrate, deserted. II. His speedy deliverance. Cried, cried while in trouble, unto the Lord, he saved, out of their distresses.

Verse 13.—Man's work and God's work. *They* cried and *He* saved.

Verse 14.—God gives light, life, liberty.

Verse 17, etc.—A Rescue from Death, with a Return of Praise.—*R. Sibbes' Works,* Vol. VI.; Nichol's edition.

Verses 17—21.—I. The distress of the sick. II. Their cure by the Great Physician. III. Their grateful behaviour to him.—*W. Romaine.*

Verses 17—22.—A Visit to Christ's Hospital. I. The names and characters of the patients—"fools"; all sinners are fools. II. The cause of their pains and afflictions—"because of their transgressions," etc. III. The progress of the disease—"their soul abhorreth all manner of meat"; and, "they draw near unto the gates of death." IV. The interposition of the physician—"then they cry," etc., ver. 19, 20. 1. Note, when the physician comes in—when "they cry," etc. 2. The kind of prayer—a cry. 3. What the physician did—"saved," "healed," "delivered." 4. How this was effected—"He sent his word," etc. V. The consequent conduct of those who were healed; they praised God for his goodness. They added sacrifice to this praise, verse 22. In addition to sacrifice the healed ones began to offer songs—"sacrifice of thanksgiving." They added a declaration of joy—"Let them declare his works with rejoicing."

Verse 18.—The sin-sick soul without appetite for invitations, encouragements, or promises, however presented. Milk too simple, strong meat too heavy, wine too heating, manna too light, etc.

Verse 18.—Teacheth us, that even appetite to our meat is a good gift of the Lord; also that when men are in greatest extremity, then is God most commonly nigh unto them.—*T. Wilcocks.*

Verse 20.—Recovery from sickness must be ascribed to the Lord, and gratitude should flow forth because of it. But the text describes spiritual and mental sickness. Notice, I. The Patient in his extremity. 1. He is a fool: by nature inclined to evil. 2. He has played the fool (see verse 17), "transgression," "iniquities." 3. He now has lost all appetite and is past all cure. 4. He is at death's door. 5. But he has begun to pray. II. The Cure in its simplicity. 1. Christ the Word is the essential cure. He heals the guilt, habit, depression, and evil results of sin. For every form of malady Christ has healing; hence preachers should preach him much, and all meditate much upon him. 2. The word in the Book is the instrumental cure: its teachings, doctrines, precepts, promises, encouragements, invitations, examples. 3. The word of the Lord by the Holy Spirit is the applying cure. He leads us to believe. He is to be sought by the sick soul. He is to be relied upon by those who would bring others to the Great Physician.

Verse 26.—The ups and downs of a convicted sinner's experience.

Verse 27.—The awakened sinner staggered and non-plussed.

Verses 33, 34.—The scene which here opens with a landscape of beauty and fertility is suddenly changed into a dry and barren wilderness. The rivers are dried up, the springs cease to flow among the hills, and the verdant fields are scorched and bare. The reason assigned for this is "the wickedness of them that dwell therein." This picture needs no interpretation to the people of God. It is precisely what happens within them when they have fallen into sin.—*G. R.*

Verse 34.—The curse, cause, and cure of barrenness in a church.

Verse 35.—Hope for decayed churches lies in God; he can work a marvellous change, he does do it—"turneth": he will do it when the cause of barrenness is removed by repentance.

Verses 35—38.—Here the scene again changes. The springs again gush forth, calm lakes again repose in the midst of foliage and flowers, the hills are clothed with luxuriant vines, and the fields are covered with corn; plenty abounds both in town and country, and men and cattle increase. This picture, too, has its counterpart in experimental godliness. "Instead of the thorn shall come up," etc., "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them," etc. The one scene precedes prayer, the other follows it. A desolate wilderness before, the garden of Eden behind.—*G. R.*

Verses 39—41.—The scene again is reversed. There is a change again from freedom to oppression; from plenty to want; from honour to contempt. Then a revival again as suddenly appears. The poor and afflicted are lifted up, and the bereaved have "families like a flock." Such are the changeful scenes through which the people of God are led; and such the experience by which they are made meet for the pure, perfect, and perpetual joys of heaven.—*G. R.*

Verses 42, 43.—Such surprising turns are of use, 1. For the solacing of saints; they observe these dispensations with pleasure: "The righteous shall see it, and rejoice," in the glorifying of God's attributes, and the manifestation of his dominion over the children of men. 2. For the silencing of sinners: "all iniquity shall stop her mouth"; *i.e.* it shall be a full conviction of the folly of those that deny the divine presence. 3. For the satisfying of all concerning the divine goodness: "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things"—these various dispensations of divine providence, "even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."—*M. Henry.*

Verse 43.—The best observation and the noblest understanding.

WORKS ON THE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH PSALM.

ΠΕ'ΛΑΓΟΣ. *Nec inter vivos, nec inter mortuos*, Neither amongst the Living, nor amongst the Dead. Or, an IMPROVEMENT of the SEA. Upon the Nine Nautical Verses in the 107. Psalme. . . . . By DANIEL PELL, Preacher of the Word. London . . . 1659 [8vo.].

A Speciall Treatise of God's Providence, and of Comforts against all kinds of crosses and calamities to be fetched from the same. With an exposition of the 107 Psalme. By P. Baro. Englished by I. L. [John Ludham] B.L. [London 1588, 8vo. Black Letter.]

A Practical Comment on the Hundred and Seventh Psalm. Preached at the Thursday's Lecture, at St. Dunstan's Church in the West, London. By William Romaine, Lecturer of the said Church. London, MDCCLXVII. [8vo.]

PSALM CVIII.

TITLE AND SUBJECT.—A Song or Psalm of David.—*To be sung jubilantly as a national hymn, or solemnly as a sacred psalm. We cannot find it in our heart to dismiss this psalm by merely referring the reader first to Psalm lvii. 7—11 and then to Psalm lx. 5—12, though it will be at once seen that those two portions of Scripture are almost identical with the verses before us. It is true that most of the commentators have done so, and we are not so presumptuous as to dispute their wisdom; but we hold for ourselves that the words would not have been repeated if there had not been an object for so doing, and that this object could not have been answered if every hearer of it had said, "Ah, we had that before, and therefore we need not meditate upon it again." The Holy Spirit is not so short of expressions that he needs to repeat himself, and the repetition cannot be meant merely to fill the book: there must be some intention in the arrangement of two former divine utterances in a new connection; whether we can discover that intent is another matter. It is at least ours to endeavour to do so, and we may expect divine assistance therein.*

We have before us THE WARRIOR'S MORNING SONG, *with which he adores his God and strengthens his heart before entering upon the conflicts of the day. As an old Prussian officer was wont in prayer to invoke the aid of "his Majesty's August Ally," so does David appeal to his God and set up his banner in Jehovah's name.*

DIVISION.—*First we have an utterance dictated by the spirit of praise, verses 1—5; then a second deliverance evoked by the spirit of believing prayer, verses 6—12; and then a final word of resolve (verse 13), as the warrior hears the war-trumpet summoning him to join battle immediately, and therefore marches with his fellow soldiers at once to the fray.*

EXPOSITION.

O GOD, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

2 Awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early.

3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

4 For thy mercy *is* great above the heavens: and thy truth *reacheth* unto the clouds.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;

These five verses are found in Psalm lvii. 7—11 almost verbatim: the only important alteration being the use of the great name of JEHOVAH in verse 3 instead of Adonai in lvii. 9. This the English reader will only be able to perceive by the use of capitals in the present Psalm and not in Psalm lvii. There are other inconsiderable alterations, but the chief point of difference probably lies in *the position* of the verses. In lvii. these notes of praise follow prayer and grow out of it; but in this case the psalmist begins at once to sing and give praise, and afterwards prays to God in a remarkably confident manner, so that he seems rather to seize the blessing than to entreat for it. Sometimes we must climb to praise by the ladder of prayer, and at other times we must bless God for the past in order to be able in faith to plead for the present and the future. By the aid of God's Spirit we can both pray ourselves up to praise, or praise the Lord till we get into a fit frame for prayer. In Psalm lvii. these words are a song in the cave of Adullam, and are the result of faith which is beginning its battles amid domestic enemies of the most malicious

kind ; but here they express the continued resolve and praise of a man who has already weathered many a campaign, has overcome all home conflicts, and is looking forward to conquests far and wide. The passage served as a fine close for one psalm, and it makes an equally noteworthy opening for another. We cannot too often with fixed heart resolve to magnify the Lord ; nor need we ever hesitate to use the same words in drawing near to God, for the Lord who cannot endure vain repetitions is equally weary of vain variations. Some expressions are so admirable that they ought to be used again ; who would throw away a cup because he drank from it before? God should be served with the best words, and when we have them they are surely good enough to be used twice. To use the same words continually and never utter a new song would show great slothfulness, and would lead to dead formalism, but we need not regard novelty of language as at all essential to devotion, nor strain after it as an urgent necessity. It may be that our heavenly Father would here teach us that if we are unable to find a great variety of suitable expressions in devotion, we need not in the slightest degree distress ourselves, but may either pray or praise, "using the same words."

1. "*O God, my heart is fixed.*" Though I have many wars to disturb me, and many cares to toss me to and fro, yet I am settled in one mind and cannot be driven from it. My heart has taken hold and abides in one resolve. Thy grace has overcome the fickleness of nature, and I am now in a resolute and determined frame of mind. "*I will sing and give praise.*" Both with voice and music will I extol thee—"I will sing and play," as some read it. Even though I have to shout in the battle I will also sing in my soul, and if my fingers must needs be engaged with the bow, yet shall they also touch the ten-stringed instrument and show forth thy praise. "*Even with my glory*"—with my intellect, my tongue, my poetic faculty, my musical skill, or whatever else causes me to be renowned, and confers honour upon me. It is my glory to be able to speak and not to be a dumb animal, therefore my voice shall show forth thy praise ; it is my glory to know God and not to be a heathen, and therefore my instructed intellect shall adore thee ; it is my glory to be a saint and no more a rebel, therefore the grace I have received shall bless thee ; it is my glory to be immortal and not a mere brute which perisheth, therefore my inmost life shall celebrate thy majesty. When he says *I will*, he supposes that there might be some temptation to refrain, but this he puts on one side, and with fixed heart prepares himself for the joyful engagement. He who sings with a fixed heart is likely to sing on, and all the while to sing well.

2. "*Awake, psaltery and harp.*" As if he could not be content with voice alone, but must use the well-tuned strings, and communicate to them something of his own liveliness. Strings are wonderful things when some men play upon them, they seem to become sympathetic and incorporated with the minstrel as if his very soul were imparted to them and thrilled through them. Only when a thoroughly enraptured soul speaks in the instrument can music be acceptable with God : as mere musical sound the Lord can have no pleasure therein, he is only pleased with the thought and feeling which are thus expressed. When a man has musical gift, he should regard it as too lovely a power to be enlisted in the cause of sin. Well did Charles Wesley say :—

"If well I know the tuneful art
To captivate a human heart,
The glory, Lord, be thine.
A servant of thy blessed will,
I here devote my utmost skill
To sound the praise divine.

"Thine own musician, Lord, inspire,
And let my consecrated lyre
Repeat the Psalmist's part.
His Son and Thine reveal in me,
And fill with sacred melody
The fibres of my heart."

"*I myself will awake early.*" I will call up the dawn. The best and brightest hours of the day shall find me heartily aroused to bless my God. Some singers had need to awake, for they sing in drawling tones, as if they were half asleep; the tune drags wearily along, there is no feeling or sentiment in the singing; but the listener hears only a dull mechanical sound, as if the choir ground out the notes from a worn-out barrel-organ. Oh, choristers, wake up, for this is not a work for dreamers, but such as requires your best powers in their liveliest condition. In all worship this should be the personal resolve of each worshipper: "I myself will awake."

3. "*I will praise thee, O* LORD, *among the people.*" Whoever may come to hear me, devout or profane, believer or heathen, civilized or barbarian, I shall not cease my music. David seemed inspired to foresee that his Psalms would be sung in every land, from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand. His heart was large, he would have the whole race of man listen to his joy in God, and lo, he has his desire, for his psalmody is cosmopolitan; no poet is so universally known as he. He had but one theme, he sang Jehovah and none beside, and his work being thus made of gold, silver, and precious stones, has endured the fiery ordeal of time, and was never more prized than at this day. Happy man, to have thus made his choice to be the Lord's musician, he retains his office as the Poet Laureate of the kingdom of heaven, and shall retain it till the crack of doom. "*And I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.*" This is written, not only to complete the parallelism of the verse, but to reaffirm his fixed resolve. He would march to battle praising Jehovah, and when he had conquered he would make the captured cities ring with Jehovah's praises. He would carry his religion with him wherever he pushed his conquests, and the vanquished should not hear the praises of David, but the glories of the Lord of Hosts. Would to God that wherever professing Christians travel they would carry the praises of the Lord with them! It is to be feared that some leave their religion when they leave their homes. Nations and peoples would soon know the gospel of Jesus if every Christian traveller were as intensely devout as the Psalmist. Alas, it is to be feared that the Lord's name is profaned rather than honoured among the heathen by many who are named by the name of Christ.

4. "*For thy mercy is great above the heavens,*" and therefore there must be no limit of time, or place, or people, when that mercy is to be extolled. As the heavens over-arch the whole earth, and from above mercy pours down upon men, so shalt thou be praised everywhere beneath the sky. Mercy is greater than the mountains, though they pierce the clouds; earth cannot hold it all, it is so vast, so boundless, so exceeding high that the heavens themselves are overtopped thereby. "*And thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.*" As far as we can see we behold thy truth and faithfulness, and there is much beyond which lies shrouded in cloud, but we are sure that it is all mercy, though it be far above and out of our sight. Therefore shall the song be lifted high and the psalm shall peal forth without stint of far-resounding music. Here is ample space for the loudest chorus, and a subject which deserves thunders of praise.

5. "*Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth.*" Let thy praise be according to the greatness of thy mercy. Ah, if we were to measure our devotion thus, with what ardour should we sing! The whole earth with its overhanging dome would seem too scant an orchestra, and all the faculties of all mankind too little for the hallelujah. Angels would be called in to aid us, and surely they would come. They will come in that day when the whole earth shall be filled with the praises of Jehovah. We long for the time when God shall be universally worshipped, and his glory in the gospel shall be everywhere made known. This is a truly missionary prayer. David had none of the exclusiveness of the modern Jew, or the narrow-heartedness of some nominal Christians. For God's sake, that his glory might be everywhere revealed, he longed to see heaven and earth full of the divine praise. Amen, so let it be.

6 That thy beloved may be delivered: save *with* thy right hand, and answer me.

7 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

8 Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;

9 Moab *is* my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.

10 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

11 *Wilt* not *thou,* O God, *who* hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?

12 Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.

Now prayer follows upon praise, and derives strength of faith and holy boldness therefrom. It is frequently best to begin worship with a hymn, and then to bring forth our vials full of odours after the harps have commenced their sweeter sounds.

6. "*That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.*" Let my prayer avail for all the beloved ones. Sometimes a nation seems to hang upon the petitions of one man. With what ardour should such an one pour out his soul! David does so here. It is easy praying for the Lord's beloved, for we feel sure of a favourable answer, since the Lord's heart is already set upon doing them good: yet it is solemn work to plead when we feel that the condition of a whole beloved nation depends upon what the Lord means to do with us whom he has placed in a representative position. "Answer *me*, that thy many beloved ones may be delivered": it is an urgent prayer. David felt that the case demanded the *right hand* of God,—his wisest, speediest, and most efficient interposition, and he feels sure of obtaining it for himself, since his cause involved the safety of the chosen people. Will the Lord fail to use his right hand of power on behalf of those whom he has set at his right hand of favour? Shall not the beloved be delivered by him who loves them? When our suit is not a selfish one, but is bound up with the cause of God, we may be very bold about it.

7. "*God hath spoken in his holiness.*" Aforetime the Lord had made large promises to David, and these his holiness had guaranteed. The divine attributes were pledged to give the son of Jesse great blessings; there was no fear that the covenant God would run back from his plighted word. "*I will rejoice.*" If God has spoken we may well be glad: the very fact of a divine revelation is a joy. If the Lord had meant to destroy us he would not have spoken to us as he has done. But what God has spoken is a still further reason for gladness, for he has declared "the sure mercies of David," and promised to establish his seed upon his throne, and to subdue all his enemies. David greatly rejoiced after the Lord had spoken to him by the mouth of Nathan. He sat before the Lord in a wonder of joy. See 1 Chronicles xvii., and note that in the next chapter David began to act vigorously against his enemies, even as in this Psalm he vows to do. "*I will divide Shechem.*" Home conquests come first. Foes must be dislodged from Israel's territory, and lands properly settled and managed. "*And mete out the valley of Succoth.*" On the other side Jordan as well as on this the land must be put in order, and secured against all wandering marauders. Some rejoicing leads to inaction, but not that which is grounded upon a lively faith in the promise of God. See how David prays, as if he had the blessing already, and could share it among his men: this comes of having sung so heartily unto the Lord his helper. See how he resolves on action, like a man whose prayers are only a part of his life, and vital portions of his action.

8. "*Gilead is mine.*" Thankful hearts dwell upon the gifts which the Lord

has given them, and think it no task to mention them one by one. "*Manasseh is mine.*" I have it already, and it is to me the token and assurance that the rest of the promised heritage will also come into my possession in due time. If we gratefully acknowledge what we have we shall be in better heart for obtaining that which as yet we have not received. He who gives us Gilead and Manasseh will not fail to put the rest of the promised territory into our hands. "*Ephraim also is the strength of mine head.*" This tribe furnished David with more than twenty thousand "mighty men of valour, famous throughout the house of their fathers": the faithful loyalty of this band was, no doubt, a proof that the rest of the tribe were with him, and so he regarded them as the helmet of the state, the guard of his royal crown. "*Judah is my lawgiver.*" There had he seated the government and chief courts of justice. No other tribe could lawfully govern but Judah: till Shiloh came the divine decree fixed the legal power in that state. To us also there is no lawgiver but our Lord who sprang out of Judah; and whenever Rome, or Canterbury, or any other power shall attempt to set up laws and ordinances for the church, we have but one reply—"Judah is my lawgiver." Thus the royal psalmist rejoiced because his own land had been cleansed of intruders, and a regular government had been set up, and guarded by an ample force, and in all this he found encouragement to plead for victory over his foreign foes. Even thus do we plead with the Lord that as in one land and another Christ's holy gospel has been set up and maintained, so also in other lands the power of his sceptre of grace may be owned till the whole earth shall bow before him, and the Edom of Antichrist shall be crushed beneath his feet.

9. "*Moab is my washpot.*" This nation had shown no friendly spirit to the Israelites, but had continually viewed them as a detested rival, therefore they were to be subdued and made subject to David's throne. He claims by faith the victory, and regards his powerful enemy with contempt. Nor was he disappointed, for "the Moabites became David's servants and brought him gifts" (2 Sam. viii. 2). As men wash their feet after a long journey, and so are revived, so vanquished difficulties serve to refresh us: we use Moab for a washpot. "*Over Edom will I cast out my shoe.*" It shall be as the floor upon which the bather throws his sandals, it shall lie beneath his foot, subject to his will and altogether his own. Edom was proud, but David throws his slipper at it; its capital was high, but he casts his sandal over it; it was strong, but he hurls his shoe at it as the gage of battle. He had not entered yet into its rock-built fortresses, but since the Lord was with him he felt sure that he would do so. Under the leadership of the Almighty, he felt so secure of conquering even fierce Edom itself that he looks upon it as a mere slave, over which he could exult with impunity. We ought never to fear those who are defending the wrong side, for since God is not with them their wisdom is folly, their strength is weakness, and their glory is their shame. We think too much of God's foes and talk of them with too much respect. Who is this Pope of Rome? His Holiness? Call him not so, but call him His Blasphemy! His Profanity! His Impudence! What are he and his cardinals, and his legates, but the image and incarnation of Antichrist, to be in due time cast with the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire? "*Over Philistia will I triumph.*" David had done so in his youth, and he is all the more sure of doing it again. We read that "David smote the Philistines and subdued them" (2 Sam. viii. 1), even as he had smitten Edom and filled it with his garrisons. The enemies with whom we battled in our youth are yet alive, and we shall have more brushes with them before we die, but, blessed be God, we are by no means dismayed at the prospect, for we expect to triumph over them even more easily than aforetime.

Thy right hand shall thy people aid;
Thy faithful promise makes us strong;
We will Philistia's land invade,
And over Edom chant the song.

Through thee we shall most valiant prove,
And tread the foe beneath our feet;
Through thee our faith shall hills remove,
And small as chaff the mountains beat.

10. Faith leads on to strong desire for the realization of the promise, and hence the practical question, "*Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?*" The difficulty is plainly perceived. Petra is strong and hard to enter: the Psalmist warrior knows that he cannot enter the city by his own power, and he therefore asks who is to help him. He asks of the right person, even of his Lord, who has all men at his beck, and can say to this man, "show my servant the road," and he will show it, or to this band, "cut your way into the rock city," and they will assuredly do it. Of Edom it is written by Obadiah, "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high: that saith in his heart, who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." David looked for his conquest to Jehovah's infinite power and he looked not in vain.

11. "*Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off?*" This is grand faith which can trust the Lord even when he seems to have cast us off. Some can barely trust him when he pampers them, and yet David relied upon him when Israel seemed under a cloud and the Lord had hidden his face. O for more of this real and living faith. The casting off will not last long when faith so gloriously keeps her hold. None but the elect of God who have obtained "like precious faith" can sing—

"Now thou array'st thine awful face
In angry frowns, without a smile;
We, through the cloud, believe thy grace,
Secure of thy compassion still."

"*And wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?*" Canst thou for ever forsake thine own and leave thy people to be overthrown by thine enemies? The sweet singer is sure that Edom shall be captured, because he cannot and will not believe that God will refrain from going forth with the armies of his chosen people. When we ask ourselves, "Who will be the means of our obtaining a promised blessing?" we need not be discouraged if we perceive no secondary agent, for we may then fall back upon the great Promiser himself, and believe that he himself will perform his word unto us. If no one else will lead us into Edom, the Lord himself will do it, if he has promised it. Or if there must be visible instruments he will use *our hosts*, feeble as they are. We need not that any new agency should be created, God can strengthen our present hosts and enable them to do all that is needed; all that is wanted even for the conquest of a world is that the Lord go forth with such forces as we already have. He can bring us into the strong city even by such weak weapons as we wield to-day.

12. "*Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*" This prayer has often fallen from the lips of men who have been bitterly disappointed by their fellows, and it has also been poured out unto the Lord in the presence of some gigantic labour in which mortal power is evidently of no avail. Edom cannot be entered by any human power, yet from its fastnesses the robber bands come rushing down; therefore, O Lord, do thou interpose and give thy people deliverance. Help divine is expected because help human is of no avail. We ought to pray with all the more confidence in God when our confidence in man is altogether gone. When the help of man is vain, we shall not find it vain to seek the help of God.

13 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

13. God's help shall inspire us to help ourselves. Faith is neither a coward nor a sluggard: she knows that God is with her, and therefore she does valiantly; she knows that he will tread down her enemies, and therefore she arises to tread them down in his name. Where praise and prayer have preceded the battle, we may expect to see heroic deeds and decisive victories. "*Through God*" is our secret support; from that source we draw all our courage, wisdom, and strength. "*We shall do valiantly.*" This is the public outflow from that secret source: our inward and spiritual faith proves itself by outward and valorous deeds. "*He shall tread down our enemies.*" They shall fall before him, and as they lie prostrate he shall march over them, and all the hosts of his people with him. This is a prophecy. It was fulfilled to David, but it remains true to the Son of David and all who are on his side. The Church shall yet arouse herself to praise her God with all her heart, and then with songs and hosannas she will advance to the great battle; her foes shall be overthrown and utterly crushed by the power of her God, and the Lord's glory shall be above all the earth. Send it in our time, we beseech thee, O Lord.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—Note the different application of the words as they are used in Psalms lvii. and lx., and as they are employed in Psalm cviii. In the former they were prophetic of prosperity yet to come, and consolatory in the expectation of approaching troubles. In the latter, they are eucharistic for mercies already received, and descriptive of the glorious things which God has prepared for his Son and for Israel his people. The Psalm, thus interpreted, announces that Messiah's travail is ended, when the troubles of Israel are brought to a close. David's Son and David's Lord has taken to himself his great power and begun to reign, and sitting upon the throne of his glory, he sings this hymn, verses 1 to 6. But with the glory of the Redeemer is associated also the restoration, to favour and happiness, of Israel, his long cast off, but not forgotten people. The setting up of King Messiah upon the holy hill of Zion is graphically described, and all Jehovah's promises are realised in the amplest measure. Messiah is described as a conqueror when the battle is won, and kings and nations, prostrate at his feet, await his sentence and judgment upon them. "I will rejoice. I will divide and portion out Shechem and the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and I give it to the children of Gad and Reuben. And Manasseh also is mine. Ephraim is my strength in war: my horn of defence. Judah is my king." Thus in gracious and flattering words, the victor addresses his confederates and subjects. In a different strain, a strain of sarcasm and contempt, he announces his pleasure respecting his vanquished enemies. "Moab I will use as a vessel to wash my feet in. Over proud Edom I will cast my shoe, as an angry master to a slave ministering to him. Philistia follow my chariot, and shout forth my triumph." But what is to be understood of the next passage, verse 10, "Who will bring me into Edom?" Edom is already treated as a vassal state, verse 9. When all the nations become the kingdoms of Messiah, what is this Edom that is to be amongst his latest triumphs? One passage only seems to bear upon it, Isaiah lxiii. 1, and from this we learn that it is from Edom as the last scene of his vengeance, the conquering Messiah will come forth, "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood." This Edom is therefore named with anxiety, because after its overthrow, Messiah will shine out "King of kings, and Lord of lords," Rev. xix. 13—16.—*R. H. Ryland.*

Whole Psalm.—This psalm hath two parts: in the former is the thanksgiving of faith and promise of praise, in hope of obtaining all which the church

is here to pray for, (ver. 1–5). In the latter part is the prayer for preservation of the church, ver. 6, with confidence to be heard and helped, whatsoever impediment appear, against all who stand out against Christ's kingdom, whether within the visible church (ver. 7, 8), or whether without, such as are professed enemies unto it, (ver. 9, 10, 11), which prayer is followed forth (ver. 12), and comfortably closed with assurance of the Church's victory by the assistance of God, ver. 13.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"*O God, my heart is fixed.*" The wheels of a chariot revolve, but the axletree turns not; the sails of a mill move with the wind, but the mill itself moves not; the earth is carried round its orbit, but its centre is fixed. So should a Christian be able, amidst changing scenes and changing fortunes, to say, "*O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed.*"—*G. S. Bowes, in "Illustrative Gatherings,"* 1862.

Verse 1.—"*My heart is fixed.*" The prophet saith *his heart was ready*, so the old translation hath it; the new translation, "*My heart is fixed.*" The word in the Hebrew signifies, first, *ready*, or *prepared*. Then, secondly, it signifies *fixed*. We first fit, prepare a thing, sharpen it, before we drive it into the ground, and then drive it in and fix it. So ask seriously and often, that thy heart may be ready, and may also be fixed, and this by a *habit* which brings readiness and fixedness, as in other holy duties, so in that of meditation. —*Nathanael Ranew, in "Solitude improved by Divine Meditation,"* 1670.

Verse 1.—Meditation is a fixed duty. It is not a cursory work. Man's thoughts naturally labour with a great inconsistency; but meditation chains them, and fastens them upon some spiritual object. The soul when it meditates lays a command on itself, that the thoughts which are otherwise flitting and feathery should fix upon its object; and so this duty is very advantageous. As we know a garden which is watered with sudden showers is more uncertain in its fruit than when it is refreshed with a constant stream; so when our thoughts are sometimes on good things, and then run off; when they only take a glance of a holy object, and then flit away, there is not so much fruit brought into the soul. In meditation, then, there must be a fixing of the heart upon the object, a steeping the thoughts, as holy David: "*O God, my heart is fixed.*" We must view the holy object presented by meditation, as a limner who views some curious piece, and carefully heeds every shade, every line and colour; as the Virgin Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. Indeed, meditation is not only the busying the thoughts, but the centering of them; not only the employing of them, but the staking them down upon some spiritual affair. When the soul, meditating upon something divine, saith as the disciples in the transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 4), "It is good to be here."—*John Wells, in the "Practical Sabbatarian,"* 1668.

Verse 1.—"*With my glory.*" The parallel passage in the Prayer-book version is, "with the best member I have." The tongue, being considered the best member, is here described as the *glory* of man—as that which tends to elevate him in the scale of creation; and therefore the pious man resolves to employ his speech in giving utterance to the goodness of God. God is glorified by the praise of his redeemed, and the instrument whereby it is effected is man's *glory.*—*The Quiver.*

Verses 1, 2.—As a man first tuneth his instrument, and then playeth on it: so should the holy servant of God first labour to bring his spirit, heart, and affections into a solid and settled frame for worship, and then go to work; "*My heart is fixed,*" or prepared firmly, "*I will sing and give praise.*" As the glory of man above the brute creatures, is that from a reasonable mind he can express what is his will by his tongue: so the glory of saints above other men, is to have a tongue directed by the heart, for expressing of God's praise: "*I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.*' Under typical terms we are taught to make use of all sanctified means for stirring of us up unto God's service: for this the psalmist intendeth, when he saith, "*Awake psaltery and*

harp." We ourselves must first be stirred up to make right use of the means, before the means can be fit to stir us up: therefore saith he, "*I myself will awake right early.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verses 1—5.—After David has professed a purpose of praising God (verses 1, 2, 3), he tells you, next, the proportion that is between the attributes which he praiseth in God, and his praise of him. The greatness of the attributes "*mercy and truth*" we have in verse 4, "*Thy truth reaches unto the clouds*"; and there is an answerable greatness in his praises of God for them, verse 5: "*Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth.*" He wisheth and endeavoureth to exalt him as high in his praises as he is in himself; to exalt him above the earth, above the heaven, and the clouds.—*Henry Jeanes.*

Verse 2.—With reference to this passage the Talmud says, "A cithern used to hang above David's bed; and when midnight came the north wind blew among the strings, so that they sounded of themselves; and forthwith he arose and busied himself with the Tôra until the pillar of the dawn ascended." Rashi observes, "The dawn awakes the other kings; but I, said David, will awake the dawn."—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 2.—When the Hebrew captives were sitting in sorrow "by the waters of Babylon," they wept, and hung their harps on the willows, and could not be prevailed upon by the conquerors to sing "the songs of Zion in that land" (Ps. cxxxvii. 1, 4). But when "the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then was their mouth filled with laughter and their tongue with singing" (cxxvi. 1, 2). Then the "*psaltery and harp*" of former generations "*awoke*" (v. 2). The old songs revived on their lips, and the melodies of David acquired new charms for them—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 2.—"*Awake early.*"

> "Yet never sleep the sun up; prayer should
> Dawn with the day, there are set awful hours
> 'Twixt heaven and us; the manna was not good
> After sun-rising, for day sullies flowers."
>
> *Henry Vaughan*, 1621—1695.

Verse 4.—"*For thy mercy is great,*" etc. His mercy is great—that mercy sung of lately (Ps. cvii. 1 and 43). It is "*from* above the heavens" (מעל־שָׁמַיִם); *i.e.*, coming down to us as do drops of a fertilizing shower; even as the "*Peace on earth,*" of Luke ii. 14, was first "peace in heaven" (Luke xix. 38).—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 4.—The mercy of God was then great *above* the heavens, when the God-man, Christ Jesus, was raised to the highest heavens, and the truth of our salvation established on the very throne of God.—*W. Wilson.*

Verses 4, 5.—There is more stuff and substance of good in the Lord's promises than the sharpest-sighted saint did or can perceive; for when we have followed the promise, to find out all the truth which is in it, we meet with a cloud of unsearchable riches, and are forced to leave it there; for so much is included in this, "*Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.*" The height of our praising of God is to put the work of praising God upon himself, and to point him out unto others as going about the magnifying of his own name, and to be glad for it, as here; "*Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; and thy glory above all the earth.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verses 4, 5, 6.—There is great confidence here, and, as ever, mercy to the soul which knows itself and comes before truth. But, then, for its own deliverance and blessing it looks to the exalting of God. This shows it must be a holy, righteous exalting. "Be *thou* exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth; that thy beloved may be delivered." It is a blessed thought, and this is what faith has to lay hold of now, even in the time

of trial, that our blessing and God's glory are one, only we must put his glory first.—*J. N. Darby.*

Verse 6.—"*That thy beloved may be delivered,*" etc. The church is the Lord's "*beloved,*" or the incorporation, more loved than anything else in the world, therefore here called, "*Thy beloved.*" Because the church is God's beloved, the care of it should be most in our mind, and the love of the preservation of it should draw forth our prayer most in favour of it. "*That thy beloved may be delivered: save.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 6.—God being thus exalted according to the majesty of his truth, the special plea of the Spirit of Jesus, founded on the mercy which has throned itself above the heavens, is next urged (verse 6) on behalf of the nation of his ancient love. "*That thy beloved* [*ones*] *may be delivered, save with thy right hand and answer me.*" It is the Spirit of Immanuel that thus makes intercession for his well-remembered people according to God. His land should be rid in due time of those who had burdened it with wickedness. For *God* had spoken in his holiness concerning the portion of his anointed.—*Arthur Pridham.*

Verse 7.—"*God hath spoken*" the word of assurance. This refers to all the words in which the land of their inheritance was defined, especially Gen. xv. 18, Ex. xxiii. 31, Deut. xi. 24, and that remarkable prediction concerning the perpetuity of David's line, 2 Sam. vii., which must have made a deep impression on his mind. From these passages it is evident that Aram as well as Edom was included in the full compass of the territory designed for Israel, and that David felt himself to be in the path of destiny when he was endeavouring to extend his sway from the river of Egypt to the great river, even the Euphrates. "*In his holiness,*" in the immutable integrity of his heart, which was an infallible guarantee for the fulfilment of his promise. "*I will exult.*" This is the exclamation of the representative head of the people, when he ponders upon the divine utterance.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 7.—Faith closing with a promise, will furnish joy to the believer before he enjoys the performance of it: "*God hath spoken,*" saith he, "*I will rejoice.*" —*David Dickson.*

Verse 7.—He, the second David, had accomplished his warfare, and had crowned himself with victory. Henceforth he would apportion the kingdoms of the world and subdue them unto himself at his own holy will. Ephraim and Judah, Moab and Philistia, the Jew first and then the Gentile, were to be brought to confess him as their Lord.—*Plain Commentary.*

Verse 8.—*Ephraim also is the strength of mine head.*" As *Ephraim* was the most populous of all the tribes, he appropriately terms it *the strength of his head*, that is, of his dominions.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—*Moab*, who had enticed Israel to impurity, is made a vessel for its purifying. *Edom*, descendant of him who despised his birthright, is deprived of his independence;—for "flinging a shoe" was a sign of the transference of a prior claim on land. Ruth. iv. 7.—*William Kay.*

Verse 9.—"*Moab is my washpot.*" The office of washing the feet was in the East commonly performed by slaves, and the meanest of the family, as appears from what Abigail said to David when he took her to wife, "Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord," 1 Sam. xxv. 41; and from the fact of our Saviour washing his disciples' feet, to give them an example of humility, John xiii. 5. The word *νιπτήρ*, used in this last passage, signifies in general *a washing-pot*, and is put for the word *ποδόνιπτρον*, the term which the Greeks, in strict propriety of speech, applied to a vessel for washing the feet. As this office was servile, so the vessels employed for this purpose were a mean part of household stuff. Gataker and Le Clerc illustrate this text from an anecdote related by Herodotus, concerning Amasis, king of

Egypt, who expressed the meanness of his own origin by comparing himself to a pot for washing the feet in, (Herod. Lib. ii. c. 172). When, therefore, it is said, "*Moab is my washing-pot*," the complete and servile subjection of Moab to David is strongly marked. This is expressed, not by comparing Moab to a slave who performs the lowest offices, as presenting to his master the basin for washing his feet, but by comparing him to the mean utensil itself. See 2 Sam. viii. 2; 1 Chron. xviii. 1, 2, 12, 13.—*James Anderson's Note to Calvin on Ps. lx.*

Verse 9.—"*Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast my shoe.*" This somewhat difficult expression may be thus explained. Moab and Edom were to be reduced to a state of lowest vassalage to the people of God. The one was to be like a pot or tub fit only for washing the feet in, while the other was to be like the domestic slave standing by to receive the sandals thrown to him by the person about to perform his ablutions, that he might first put them by in a safe place, and then come and wash his master's feet.—"*Rays from the East.*"

Verse 9.—"*Over Edom will I cast my shoe.*" David overthrew their army in the "Valley of Salt," and his general, Joab, following up the victory, destroyed nearly the whole male population (1 Kings xi. 15, 16), and placed Jewish garrisons in all the strongholds of Edom (2 Sam. viii. 13, 14). In honour of that victory the Psalmist-warrior may have penned the words in Ps. lx. 8, "*Over Edom will I cast my shoe.*"—*J. L. Porter. in "Smith's Dictionary of the Bible."*

Verse 10.—The strong city built on the rock, even man's hardened heart, stronger and more stony than the tomb, he had conquered and overcome; and in him and his might are his people to carry on his warfare, and to cast down all the strongholds of human pride, and human stubbornness, and human unrepentance.—*Plain Commentary.*

Verses 10, 11.—It is not conclusive evidence that we are not called to undertake a given work or perform a certain duty, because it is very difficult, or even impossible for us to succeed without special help from God. If God calls David to take Petra, he shall take Petra.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 11.—"*Wilt not thou, O God?*" His hand shall lead him even to Petra, which seems unapproachable by human strength. That marvellous rock-city of the Edomites is surrounded by rocks some of which are three hundred feet high, and a single path twelve in width leads to it. The city itself is partly hewn out of the cloven rocks, and its ruins, which however belong to a later period, fill travellers with amazement.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 11.—He who came victorious from Edom, and with garments dyed in the blood of his passion from Bozrah, will henceforth now go forth with the armies of the true Israel,—for what are hosts without the Lord of hosts?—to subdue their enemy.—*Plain Commentary.*

Verse 12.—"*Give us help from trouble,*" etc. He who would have God's help in any business, must quit confidence in man's help; and the seeing of the vanity of man's help must make the believer to trust the more unto, and expect the more confidently God's help, as here is done. "*Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*"—*David Dickson.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Whole Psalm.—Parts of two former psalms are here united in one. I. Repetition is here sanctioned by inspiration. 1. Of what? Of hymns, of prayers, of sermons. 2. For what? For impression. "As we said before so say I now again, if any man preach," etc. For confirmation: "Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice": they went through Syria and Cilicia again confirming the churches. For preservation: quotations authenticate originals, a writing in two copies is safer than in one. II. Re-arrangement is here sanctioned by inspiration. 1. Different experiences may require it. Sometimes the heart is most fixed at the commencement of a spiritual exercise: sometimes at its close. Hence the commencement of one psalm is the close of another. 2. Different occasions may require it. As of sorrow and joy. Two parts of two different hymns may better harmonise with a particular occasion than either one separately considered.—*G. R.*

Verse 1.—I. The best occupation: praise. Worthy—1. Of the heart in its best condition. 2. Of the best faculties of the best educated man. II. The best resolution. 1. Arising from a fixed heart. 2. Deliberately formed. 3. Solemnly expressed. 4. Joyfully executed. III. The best results. To praise God makes a man both happier and holier, stronger and bolder—as the succeeding verses show.

Verse 2.—The benefit of early rising. The sweetness of the Sabbath morning early prayer-meeting.

Verse 3.—We must not restrain praise because we are overheard by strangers, nor because the listeners are heathen, or ungodly, or are numerous, or are likely to oppose. There may be all the more reason for our outspoken praise of God when we are in such circumstances.

Verses 4, 5.—The greatness of mercy, the height of truth, and the immensity of the Divine praise.

Verse 6.—The prayer of a representative man. There are times when to answer *me* is to deliver the church—at such times I have a powerful plea.

Verse 7.—God's voice the cause of joy, the reason for action, the guarantee of success.

Verse 8.—"*Judah is my lawgiver.*" Jesus the sole and only lawmaker in the church.

Verse 11 (*first clause*).—Confidence in a frowning God.

Verse 11 (*second clause*).—Whether God will go forth with our hosts depends upon—Who they are? What is their object? What is their motive and spirit? What weapons do they use? etc.

Verse 12.—The failure of human help is often—1. The direct cause of our prayer. 2. The source of urgency in pleading. 3. A powerful argument for the pleader. 4. A distinct reason for hope to light upon.

Verse 13.—How, when, and why a believer should do valiantly.

PSALM CIX.

To the Chief Musician.—*Intended therefore to be sung, and sung in the temple service! Yet is it by no means easy to imagine the whole nation singing such dreadful imprecations. We ourselves, at any rate, under the gospel dispensation, find it very difficult to infuse into the Psalm a gospel sense, or a sense at all compatible with the Christian spirit; and therefore one would think the Jews must have found it hard to chant such strong language without feeling the spirit of revenge excited; and the arousal of that spirit could never have been the object of divine worship in any period of time—under law or under gospel. At the very outset this Psalm shows that the Psalm has a meaning with which it is fitting for men of God to have fellowship before the throne of the Most High: but what is that meaning? This is a question of no small difficulty, and only a very childlike spirit will ever be able to answer it.*

A Psalm of David. *Not therefore the ravings of a vicious misanthrope, or the execrations of a hot, revengeful spirit. David would not smite the man who sought his blood, he frequently forgave those who treated him shamefully: and therefore these words cannot be read in a bitter, revengeful sense, for that would be foreign to the character of the son of Jesse. The imprecatory sentences before us were penned by one who with all his courage in battle was a man of music and of tender heart, and they were meant to be addressed to God in the form of a Psalm, and therefore they cannot possibly have been meant to be mere angry cursing.*

Unless it can be proved that the religion of the old dispensation was altogether hard, morose, and Draconian, and that David was of a malicious, vindictive spirit, it cannot be conceived that this Psalm contains what one author has ventured to call "a pitiless hate, a refined and insatiable malignity." To such a suggestion we cannot give place, no, not for an hour. But what else can we make of such strong language? Truly this is one of the hard places of Scripture, a passage which the soul trembles to read; yet as it is a Psalm unto God, and given by inspiration, it is not ours to sit in judgment upon it, but to bow our ear to what God the Lord would speak to us therein.

This psalm refers to Judas, for so Peter quoted it; but to ascribe its bitter denunciations to our Lord in the hour of his sufferings is more than we dare to do. These are not consistent with the silent Lamb of God, who opened not his mouth when led to the slaughter. It may seem very pious to put such words into his mouth; we hope it is our piety which prevents our doing so. *See our first note from Perowne on page 168.*

Division.—*In the first five verses David humbly pleads with God that he may be delivered from his remorseless and false-hearted enemies. From 6—20, filled with a prophetic furor, which carries him entirely beyond himself, he denounces judgment upon his foes, and then from 21—31 he returns to his communion with God in prayer and praise. The central portion of the Psalm in which the difficulty lies must be regarded not as the personal wish of the Psalmist in cool blood, but as his prophetic denunciation of such persons as he describes, and emphatically of one special "son of perdition" whom he sees with prescient eye. We would all pray for the conversion of our worst enemy, and David would have done the same; but viewing the adversaries of the Lord, and doers of iniquity,* as such, and as incorrigible *we cannot wish them well; on the contrary, we desire their overthrow, and destruction. The gentlest hearts burn with indignation when they hear of barbarities to women and children, of crafty plots for ruining the innocent, of cruel oppression of helpless orphans, and gratuitous ingratitude to the good and gentle. A curse upon the perpetrators of the atrocities in Turkey may not be less virtuous than a blessing upon the righteous. We wish well to all mankind, and for that very reason we sometimes blaze with indignation against the inhuman wretches by whom every law which protects our fellow creatures is trampled down, and every dictate of humanity is set at nought.*

EXPOSITION.

HOLD not thy peace, O God of my praise ;
2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me : they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred ; and fought against me without a cause.
4 For my love they are my adversaries : but I *give myself unto* prayer.
5 And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

1. "*Hold not thy peace.*" Mine enemies speak, be thou pleased to speak too. Break thy solemn silence, and silence those who slander me. It is the cry of a man whose confidence in God is deep, and whose communion with him is very close and bold. Note, that he only asks the Lord to speak : a word from God is all a believer needs. "*O God of my praise.*" Thou whom my whole soul praises, be pleased to protect my honour and guard my praise. "My heart is fixed," said he in the former psalm, "I will sing and give praise," and now he appeals to the God whom he had praised. If we take care of God's honour he will take care of ours. We may look to him as the guardian of our character if we truly seek his glory. If we live to God's praise, he will in the long run give us praise among men.

2. "*For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me.*" Wicked men must needs say wicked things, and these we have reason to dread ; but in addition they utter false and deceitful things, and these are worst of all. There is no knowing what may come out of mouths which are at once lewd and lying. The misery caused to a good man by slanderous reports no heart can imagine but that which is wounded by them : in all Satan's armoury there are no worse weapons than deceitful tongues. To have a reputation, over which we have watched with daily care, suddenly bespattered with the foulest aspersions, is painful beyond description ; but when wicked and deceitful men get their mouths fully opened we can hardly expect to escape any more than others. "*They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.*" Lying tongues cannot lie still. Bad tongues are not content to vilify bad men, but choose the most gracious of saints to be the objects of their attacks. Here is reason enough for prayer. The heart sinks when assailed with slander, for we know not what may be said next, what friend may be alienated, what evil may be threatened, or what misery may be caused to us and others. The air is full of rumours, and shadows impalpable flit around ; the mind is confused with dread of unseen foes, and invisible arrows. What ill can be worse than to be assailed with slander,

> "Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
> Outvenoms all the worms of Nile" ?

3. "*They compassed me about also with words of hatred.*" Turn which way he would they hedged him in with falsehood, misrepresentation, accusation, and scorn. Whispers, sneers, insinuations, satires, and open charges filled his ear with a perpetual buzz, and all for no reason, but sheer hate. Each word was as full of venom as an egg is full of meat : they could not speak without showing their teeth. "*And fought against me without a cause.*" He had not provoked the quarrel or contributed to it, yet in a thousand ways they laboured to "corrode his comfort, and destroy his ease." All this tended to make the suppliant feel the more acutely the wrongs which were done to him.

4. "*For my love they are my adversaries.*" They hate me because I love them. One of our poets says of the Lord Jesus—"Found guilty of excess of love." Surely it was his only fault. Our Lord might have used all the language of this complaint most emphatically—they hated him without a cause and returned him hatred for love. What a smart this is to the soul, to be hated in proportion to the gratitude which it deserved, hated by those it loved, and hated because of its love. This was a cruel case, and the sensitive mind of the psalmist writhed under it. "*But I give myself unto prayer.*" He did nothing else but pray. He became prayer as they became malice. This was his answer to his enemies, he appealed from men and their injustice to the Judge of all the earth, who must do right. True bravery alone can teach a man to leave his traducers unanswered, and carry the case unto the Lord.

"Men cannot help but reverence the courage that walketh amid calumnies unanswering."

"He standeth as a gallant chief unheeding shot or shell."

5. "*And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*" Evil for good is devil-like. This is Satan's line of action, and his children upon earth follow it greedily; it is cruel, and wounds to the quick. The revenge which pays a man back in his own coin has a kind of natural justice in it; but what shall be said of that baseness which returns to goodness the very opposite of what it has a right to expect? Our Lord endured such base treatment all his days, and, alas, in his members, endures it still.

Thus we see the harmless and innocent man upon his knees pouring out his lamentation: we are now to observe him rising from the mercy-seat, inspired with prophetic energy, and pouring forth upon his foes the forewarnings of their doom. We shall hear him speak like a judge clothed with stern severity, or like the angel of doom robed in vengeance, or as the naked sword of justice when she bares her arm for execution. It is not for himself that he speaks so much as for all the slandered and the down-trodden, of whom he feels himself to be the representative and mouthpiece. He asks for justice, and as his soul is stung with cruel wrongs he asks with solemn deliberation, making no stint in his demands. To pity malice would be malice to mankind; to screen the crafty seekers of human blood would be cruelty to the oppressed. Nay, love, and truth, and pity lift their wounds to heaven, and implore vengeance on the enemies of the innocent and oppressed; those who render goodness itself a crime, and make innocence a motive for hate, deserve to find no mercy from the great Preserver of men. Vengeance is the prerogative of God, and as it would be a boundless calamity if evil were for ever to go unpunished, so it is an unspeakable blessing that the Lord will recompense the wicked and cruel man, and there are times and seasons when a good man ought to pray for that blessing. When the Judge of all threatens to punish tyrannical cruelty and falsehearted treachery, virtue gives her assent and consent. Amen, so let it be, saith every just man in his inmost soul.

6 Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.

7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.

8 Let his days be few; *and* let another take his office.

9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.

11 Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour.

12 Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

13 Let his posterity be cut off ; *and* in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD ; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.

15 Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

17 As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him : as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.

18 As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

19 Let it be unto him as the garment *which* covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.

20 *Let* this *be* the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul.

6. "*Set thou a wicked man over him.*" What worse punishment could a man have? The proud man cannot endure the proud, nor the oppressor brook the rule of another like himself. The righteous in their patience find the rule of the wicked a sore bondage ; but those who are full of resentful passions, and haughty aspirations, are slaves indeed when men of their own class have the whip hand of them. For Herod to be ruled by another Herod would be wretchedness enough, and yet what retribution could be more just? What unrighteous man can complain if he finds himself governed by one of like character? What can the wicked expect but that their rulers should be like themselves? Who does not admire the justice of God when he sees fierce Romans ruled by Tiberius and Nero, and Red Republicans governed by Marat and Robespierre? "*And let Satan stand at his right hand.*" Should not like come to like? Should not the father of lies stand near his children? Who is a better right-hand friend for an adversary of the righteous than the great adversary himself? The curse is an awful one, but it is most natural that it should come to pass : those who serve Satan may expect to have his company, his assistance, his temptations, and at last his doom.

7. "*When he shall be judged, let him be condemned.*" He judged and condemned others in the vilest manner, he suffered not the innocent to escape : and it would be a great shame if in his time of trial, being really guilty, he should be allowed to go free. Who would wish Judge Jeffries to be acquitted if he were tried for perverting justice? Who would desire Nero or Caligula to be cleared if set at the bar for cruelty? When Shylock goes into court, who wishes him to win his suit? "*And let his prayer become sin.*" It is sin already, let it be so treated. To the injured it must seem terrible that the black-hearted villain should nevertheless pretend to pray, and very naturally do they beg that he may not be heard, but that his pleadings may be regarded as an addition to his guilt. He has devoured the widow's house, and yet he prays. He has put Naboth to death by false accusation and taken possession of his vineyard, and then he presents prayers to the Almighty. He has given up villages to slaughter, and his hands are red with the blood of babes and maidens, and then he pays his vows unto Allah ! He must surely be accursed himself who does not wish that such abominable prayers may be loathed of heaven and written down as new sins. He who makes it a sin for others to pray will find his own praying become sin. When he at last sees his need of mercy, mercy herself

shall resent his appeal as an insult. "Because that he remembered not to show mercy," he shall himself be forgotten by the God of grace, and his bitter cries for deliverance shall be regarded as mockeries of heaven.

8. "*Let his days be few.*" Who would desire a persecuting tyrant to live long? As well might we wish length of days to a mad dog. If he will do nothing but mischief the shortening of his life will be the lengthening of the world's tranquillity. "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days,"—this is bare justice to them, and great mercy to the poor and needy. "*And let another take his office.*" Perhaps a better man may come, at any rate it is time a change were tried. So used were the Jews to look upon these verses as the doom of traitors, of cruel and deceitful mind, that Peter saw at once in the speedy death of Judas a fulfilment of this sentence, and a reason for the appointment of a successor who should take his place of oversight. A bad man does not make an office bad: another may use with benefit that which he perverted to ill uses.

9. "*Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.*" This would inevitably be the case when the man died, but the psalmist uses the words in an emphatic sense, he would have his widow "a widow indeed," and his children so friendless as to be orphaned in the bitterest sense. He sees the result of the bad man's decease, and includes it in the punishment. The tyrant's sword makes many children fatherless, and who can lament when his barbarities come home to his own family, and they too, weep and lament. Pity is due to all orphans and widows as such, but a father's atrocious actions may dry up the springs of pity. Who mourns that Pharaoh's children lost their father, or that Sennacherib's wife became a widow? As Agag's sword had made women childless none wept when Samuel's weapon made his mother childless among women. If Herod had been slain when he had just murdered the innocents at Bethlehem no man would have lamented it even though Herod's wife would have become a widow. These awful maledictions are not for common men to use, but for judges, such as David was, to pronounce over the enemies of God and man. A judge may sentence a man to death whatever the consequences may be to the criminal's family, and in this there will be no feeling of private revenge, but simply the doing of justice because evil must be punished. We are aware that this may not appear to justify the full force of these expressions, but it should never be forgotten that the case supposed is a very execrable one, and the character of the culprit is beyond measure loathsome and not to be met by any common abhorrence. Those who regard a sort of effeminate benevolence to all creatures alike as the acme of virtue are very much in favour with this degenerate age; these look for the salvation of the damned, and even pray for the restoration of the devil. It is very possible that if they were less in sympathy with evil, and more in harmony with the thoughts of God, they would be of a far sterner and also of a far better mind. To us it seems better to agree with God's curses than with the devil's blessings; and when at any time our heart kicks against the terrors of the Lord we take it as a proof of our need of greater humbling, and confess our sin before our God.

10. "*Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg.*" May they have neither house nor home, settlement nor substance; and while they thus wander and beg may it ever be on their memory that their father's house lies in ruins,—"*let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.*" It has often been so: a race of tyrants has become a generation of beggars. Misused power and abused wealth have earned the family name universal detestation, and secured to the family character an entail of baseness. Justice herself would award no such doom except upon the supposition that the sin descended with the blood; but supreme providence which in the end is pure justice has written many a page of history in which the imprecation of this verse has been literally verified.

We confess that as we read some of these verses we have need of all our faith and reverence to accept them as the voice of inspiration; but the exercise is good

for the soul, for it educates our sense of ignorance, and tests our teachableness. Yes, Divine Spirit, we can and do believe that even these dread words from which we shrink have a meaning consistent with the attributes of the Judge of all the earth, though his name is LOVE. How this may be we shall know hereafter.

11. "*Let the extortioner catch all that he hath.*" A doom indeed. Those who have once fallen into the hands of the usurer can tell you what this means: it were better to be a fly in the web of a spider. In the most subtle, worrying, and sweeping manner the extortioner takes away, piece by piece, his victim's estate, till not a fraction remains to form a pittance for old age. Baiting his trap, watching it carefully, and dexterously driving his victim into it, the extortioner by legal means performs unlawful deeds, *catches* his bird, strips him of every feather, and cares not if he die of starvation. He robs with law to protect him, and steals with the magistrate at his back: to fall into his clutches is worse than to be beset by professed thieves. "*And let the strangers spoil his labour,*"—so that his kindred may have none of it. What with hard creditors and pilfering strangers the estate must soon vanish! Extortion drawing one way, and spoliation the other, a known moneylender and an unknown robber both at work, the man's substance would soon disappear, and rightly so, for it was gathered by shameless means. This too has been frequently seen. Wealth amassed by oppression has seldom lasted to the third generation: it was gathered by wrong and by wrong it is scattered, and who would decree that it should be otherwise? Certainly those who suffer beneath high-handed fraud will not wish to stay the retributions of the Almighty, nor would those who see the poor robbed and trampled on desire to alter the divine arrangements by which such evils are recompensed even in this life.

12. "*Let there be none to extend mercy unto him.*" He had no mercy, but on the contrary, he crushed down all who appealed to him. Loath to smite him with his own weapon, stern justice can do no otherwise, she lifts her scales and sees that this, too, must be in the sentence. "*Neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.*" We are staggered to find the children included in the father's sentence, and yet as a matter of fact children do suffer for their father's sins, and, as long as the affairs of this life are ordered as they are, it must be so. So involved are the interests of the race, that it is quite impossible in all respects to view the father and the child apart. No man among us could desire to see the fatherless suffer for their desceased father's fault, yet so it happens, and there is no injustice in the fact. They share the parent's ill-gotten gain or rank, and their aggrandizement is a part of the object at which he aimed in the perpetration of his crimes; to allow them to prosper would be an encouragement and reward of his iniquity; therefore, for these and other reasons, a man perishes not alone in his iniquity. The ban is on his race. If the man were innocent this would be a crime; if he were but commonly guilty it would be excessive retribution; but when the offence reeks before high heaven in unutterable abomination, it is little marvel that men devote the man's whole house to perpetual infamy, and that so it happeneth.

13. "*Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.*" Both from existence and from memory let them pass away till none shall know that such a vile brood ever existed. Who wishes to see the family of Domitian or Julian continued upon earth? Who would mourn if the race of Tom Paine or of Voltaire should come to an utter end? It would be undesirable that the sons of the utterly villainous and bloodthirsty should rise to honour, and if they did they would only revive the memory of their father's sins.

14. This verse is, perhaps, the most terrible of all, but yet as a matter of fact children do procure punishment upon their parents' sins, and are often themselves the means of such punishment. A bad son brings to mind his father's bad points of character; people say, "Ah, he is like the old man. He takes after his father." A mother's sins also will be sure to be called to mind

if her daughter becomes grossly wicked. "Ah," they will say, "there is little wonder, when you consider what her mother was." These are matters of every-day occurrence. We cannot, however, pretend to explain the righteousness of this malediction, though we fully believe in it. We leave it till our heavenly Father is pleased to give us further instruction. Yet, as a man's faults are often learned from his parents, it is not unjust that his consequent crimes should recoil upon him.

15. Again, he wishes that his father's sins may follow up the transgressor and assist to fill the measure of his own iniquities, so that for the whole accumulated load the family may be smitten with utter extinction. A king might justly wish for such an end to fall upon an incorrigible brood of rebels; and of persecutors, continuing in the same mind, the saints might well pray for their extinction; but the passage is dark; and we must leave it so. It must be right or it would not be here, but how we cannot see. Why should we expect to understand all things? Perhaps it is more for our benefit to exercise humility, and reverently worship God over a hard text, than it would be to comprehend all mysteries.

16. "*Because that he remembered not to shew mercy.*" Because he had no memory to show mercy the Judge of all will have a strong memory of his sins. So little mercy had he ever shown that he had forgotten how to do it, he was without common humanity, devoid of compassion, and therefore only worthy to be dealt with after the bare rule of justice. "*But persecuted the poor and needy man.*" He looked on poor men as a nuisance upon the earth, he ground their faces, oppressed them in their wages, and treated them as the mire of the streets. Should he not be punished, and in his turn laid low? All who know him are indignant at his brutalities, and will glory to see him overthrown. "*That he might even slay the broken in heart.*" He had malice in his heart towards one who was already sufficiently sorrowful, whom it was a superfluity of malignity to attack. Yet no grief excited sympathy in him, no poverty ever moved him to relent. No, he would kill the heart-broken and rob their orphans of their patrimony. To him groans were music, and tears were wine, and drops of blood precious rubies. Would any man spare such a monster? Will it not be serving the ends of humanity if we wish him gone, gone to the throne of God to receive his reward? If he will turn and repent, well: but if not, such a upas tree ought to be felled and cast into the fire. As men kill mad dogs if they can, and justly too, so may we lawfully wish that cruel oppressors of the poor were removed from their place and office, and, as an example to others, made to smart for their barbarities.

17. "*As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him.*" Deep down in every man's soul the justice of the *lex talionis* is established. Retaliation, not for private revenge, but as a measure of public justice, is demanded by the psalmist and deserved by the crime. Surely the malicious man cannot complain if he is judged by his own rule, and has his corn measured with his own bushel. Let him have what he loved. They are his own chickens, and they ought to come home to roost. He made the bed, let him lie on it himself. As he brewed, so let him drink. So all men say as a matter of justice, and though the higher law of love overrides all personal anger, yet as against the base characters here described even Christian love would not wish to see the sentence mitigated. "*As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.*" He felt no joy in any man's good, nor would he lift a hand to do another a service, rather did he frown and fret when another prospered or mirth was heard under his window; what, then, can we wish him? Blessing was wasted on him, he hated those who gently sought to lead him to a better mind; even the blessings of providence he received with murmurs and repinings, he wished for famine to raise the price of his corn, and for war to increase his trade. Evil was good to him, and good he counted evil. If he could have blasted every field of corn in the world he would have done so if he could have turned a penny by it, or if he could thereby have injured the good man whom he hated from his very soul.

What can we wish for him? He hunts after evil, he hates good; he lays himself out to ruin the godly whom God has blessed, he is the devil's friend, and as fiendish as his patron; should things go well with such a being? Shall we "wish him good luck in the name of the Lord?" To invoke blessings on such a man would be to participate in his wickedness, therefore let blessing be far from him, so long as he continues what he now is.

18, 19. He was so openly in the habit of wishing ill to others that he seemed to wear robes of cursing, therefore let it be as his raiment girded and belted about him, yea, let it enter as water into his bowels, and search the very marrow of his bones like a penetrating oil. It is but common justice that he should receive a return for his malice, and receive it in kind, too.

20. This is the summing up of the entire imprecation, and fixes it upon the persons who had so maliciously assailed the inoffensive man of God. David was a man of gentle mould, and remarkably free from the spirit of revenge, and therefore we may here conceive him to be speaking as a judge or as a representative man, in whose person great principles needed to be vindicated and great injuries redressed.

Thousands of God's people are perplexed with this psalm, and we fear we have contributed very little towards their enlightenment, and perhaps the notes we have gathered from others, since they display such a variety of view, may only increase the difficulty. What then? Is it not good for us sometimes to be made to feel that we are not yet able to understand all the word and mind of God? A thorough bewilderment, so long as it does not stagger our faith, may be useful to us by confounding our pride, arousing our faculties, and leading us to cry, "What I know not teach thou me."

21 But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy *is* good, deliver thou me.

22 For I *am* poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

23 I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.

24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.

25 I became also a reproach unto them: *when* they looked upon me they shaked their heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:

27 That they may know that this *is* thy hand; *that* thou, LORD, hast done it.

28 Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.

29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.

30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.

31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save *him* from those that condemn his soul.

21. "*But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake.*" How eagerly he turns from his enemies to his God! He sets the great THOU in opposition to all his adversaries, and you see at once that his heart is at rest. The words are very indistinct, and though our version may not precisely

translate them, yet it in a remarkable manner hits upon the sense and upon the obscurity which hangs over it. "Do thou for me"—what shall he do? Why, do whatever he thinks fit. He leaves himself in the Lord's hands, dictating nothing, but quite content so long as his God will but undertake for him. His plea is not his own merit, but *the name*. The saints have always felt this to be their most mighty plea. God himself has performed his grandest deeds of grace for the honour of his name, and his people know that this is the most potent argument with him. What the Lord himself has guarded with sacred jealousy we should reverence with our whole hearts and rely upon without distrust. "*Because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.*" Not because I am good, but because thy mercy is good: see how the saints fetch their pleadings in prayer from the Lord himself. God's mercy is the star to which the Lord's people turn their eye when they are tossed with tempest and not comforted, for the peculiar bounty and goodness of that mercy have a charm for weary hearts. When man has no mercy we shall still find it in God. When man would devour we may look to God to deliver. His name and his mercy are two firm grounds for hope, and happy are those who know how to rest upon them.

22. "*For I am poor and needy.*" When he does plead anything about himself he urges not his riches or his merits, but his poverty and his necessities: this is gospel supplication, such as only the Spirit of God can indite upon the heart. This lowliness does not comport with the supposed vengeful spirit of the preceding verses: there must therefore be some interpretation of them which would make them suitable in the lips of a lowly-minded man of God. "*And my heart is wounded within me.*" The Lord has always a tender regard to broken-hearted ones, and such the psalmist had become: the undeserved cruelty, the baseness, the slander of his remorseless enemies had pierced him to the soul, and this sad condition he pleads as a reason for speedy help. It is time for a friend to step in when the adversary cuts so deep. The case has become desperate without divine aid; now, therefore, is the Lord's time.

23. "*I am gone like the shadow when it declineth.*" I am a mere shadow, a shadow at the vanishing point, when it stretches far, but is almost lost in the universal gloom of evening which settles over all, and so obliterates the shadows cast by the setting sun. Lord, there is next to nothing left of me, wilt thou not come in before I am quite gone? "*I am tossed up and down as the locust,*" which is the sport of the winds, and must go up or down as the breeze carries it. The psalmist felt as powerless in his distress as a poor insect, which a child may toss up and down at its pleasure. He entreats the divine pity, because he had been brought to this forlorn and feeble condition by the long persecution which his tender heart had endured. Slander and malice are apt to produce nervous disorders and to lead on to pining diseases. Those who use these poisoned arrows are not always aware of the consequences; they scatter firebrands and death and say it is sport.

24. "*My knees are weak through fasting;*" either religious fasting, to which he resorted in the dire extremity of his grief, or else through loss of appetite occasioned by distress of mind. Who can eat when every morsel is soured by envy? This is the advantage of the slanderer, that he feels nothing himself, while his sensitive victim can scarcely eat a morsel of bread because of his sensitiveness. However, the good God knoweth all this, and will succour his afflicted. The Lord who bids *us* confirm the feeble knees will assuredly do it himself. "*And my flesh faileth of fatness.*" He was wasted to a skeleton, and as his body was emaciated, so was his soul bereft of comfort: he was pining away, and all the while his enemies saw it and laughed at his distress. How pathetically he states his case; this is one of the truest forms of prayer, the setting forth of our sorrow before the Lord. Weak knees are strong with God, and failing flesh has great power in pleading.

25. "*I became also a reproach unto them.*" They made him the theme of ridicule, the butt of their ribald jests: his emaciation by fasting made him a tempting subject for their caricatures and lampoons. "*When they looked upon*

me they shaked their heads." Words were not a sufficient expression of their scorn, they resorted to gestures which were meant both to show their derision and to irritate his mind. Though these things break no bones, yet they do worse, for they break and bruise far tenderer parts of us. Many a man who could have answered a malicious speech, and so have relieved his mind, has felt keenly a sneer, a putting out of the tongue, or some other sign of contempt. Those, too, who are exhausted by such fasting and wasting, as the last verse describes are generally in a state of morbid sensibility, and therefore feel more acutely the unkindness of others. What they would smile at during happier seasons becomes intolerable when they are in a highly nervous condition.

26. "*Help me, O* LORD *my God.*" Laying hold of Jehovah by the appropriating word *my*, he implores his aid both to help him to bear his heavy load and to enable him to rise superior to it. He has described his own weakness, and the strength and fury of his foes, and by these two arguments he urges his appeal with double force. This is a very rich, short, and suitable prayer for believers in any situation of peril, difficulty, or sorrow. "*O save me according to thy mercy.*" As thy mercy is, so let thy salvation be. The measure is a great one, for the mercy of God is without bound. When man has no mercy it is comforting to fall back upon God's mercy. Justice to the wicked is often mercy to the righteous, and because God is merciful he will save his people by overthrowing their adversaries.

27. "*That they may know that this is thy hand.*" Dolts as they are, let the mercy shown to me be so conspicuous that they shall be forced to see the Lord's agency in it. Ungodly men will not see God's hand in anything if they can help it, and when they see good men delivered into their power they become more confirmed than ever in their atheism; but all in good time God will arise and so effectually punish their malice and rescue the object of their spite that they will be compelled to say like the Egyptian magicians, "this is the finger of God." "*That thou,* LORD, *hast done it.*" There will be no mistaking the author of so thorough a vindication, so complete a turning of the tables.

28. "*Let them curse, but bless thou,*" or, "*they will curse and thou wilt bless.*" Their cursing will then be of such little consequence that it will not matter a straw. One blessing from the Lord will take the poison out of ten thousand curses of men. "*When they arise, let them be ashamed.*" They lift up themselves to deal out another blow, to utter another falsehood, and to watch for its injurious effects upon their victim, but they see their own defeat and are filled with shame. "*But let thy servant rejoice.*" Not merely as a man protected and rescued, but as God's servant in whom his master's goodness and glory are displayed when he is saved from his foes. It ought to be our greatest joy that the Lord is honoured in our experience; the mercy itself ought not so much to rejoice us as the glory which is thereby brought to him who so graciously bestows it.

29. "*Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame.*" It is a prophecy as well as a wish, and may be read both in the indicative and the imperative. Where sin is the underclothing, shame will soon be the outer vesture. He who would clothe good men with contempt shall himself be clothed with dishonour. "*And let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.*" Let their confusion be broad enough to wrap them all over from head to foot, let them bind it about them and hide themselves in it, as being utterly afraid to be seen. Now they walk abroad unblushingly and reveal their own wickedness, acting as if they either had nothing to conceal or did not care whether it was seen or no; but they will be of another mind when the great Judge deals with them, then will they entreat mountains to hide them and hills to fall upon them, that they may not be seen: but all in vain, they must be dragged to the bar with no other covering but their own confusion.

30. "*I will greatly praise the* LORD *with my mouth.*" Enthusiastically, abundantly, and loudly will he extol the righteous Lord, who redeemed him

from all evil; and that not only in his own chamber or among his own family, but in the most public manner. "*Yea, I will praise him among the multitude.*" Remarkable and public providences demand public recognition, for otherwise men of the world will judge us to be ungrateful. We do not praise God to be heard of men, but as a natural sense of justice leads every one to expect to hear a befriended person speak well of his benefactor, we therefore have regard to such natural and just expectations, and endeavour to make our praises as public as the benefit we have received. The singer in the present case is the man whose heart was wounded within him because he was the laughing-stock of remorseless enemies; yet now he praises, praises greatly, praises aloud, praises in the teeth of all gainsayers, and praises with a right joyous spirit. Never let us despair, yea, never let us cease to praise.

31. "*For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor.*" God will not be absent when his people are on their trial; he will hold a brief for them and stand in court as their advocate, prepared to plead on their behalf. How different is this from the doom of the ungodly who has Satan at his right hand (verse 6). "*To save him from those that condemn his soul.*" The court only met as a matter of form, the malicious had made up their minds to the verdict, they judged him guilty, for their hate condemned him, yea, they pronounced sentence of damnation upon the very soul of their victim: but what mattered it? The great King was in court, and their sentence was turned against themselves. Nothing can more sweetly sustain the heart of a slandered believer than the firm conviction that God is near to all who are wronged, and is sure to work out their salvation.

O Lord, save us from the severe trial of slander: deal in thy righteousness with all those who spitefully assail the characters of holy men, and cause all who are smarting under calumny and reproach to come forth unsullied from the affliction, even as did thine only-begotten Son. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—"*Mysterious*" was the one word written opposite this psalm in the pocket Bible of a late devout and popular writer. It represents the utter perplexity with which it is very generally regarded.—*Joseph Hammond.*

Whole Psalm.—In this psalm David is supposed to refer to Doeg the Edomite, or to Ahithopel. It is the most imprecatory of the psalms, and may well be termed *the Iscariot Psalm.* What David here refers to his mortal enemy, finds its accomplishment in the betrayer of the Son of David. It is from the 8th verse that Peter infers the necessity of filling up the vacancy occasioned by the death of Judas: it was, says he, predicted that another should take his office.—*Paton J. Gloag, in "A Commentary on the Acts,"* 1870.

Whole Psalm.—We may consider Judas, at the same time, as the virtual head of the Jewish nation in their daring attempt to dethrone the Son of God. The doom pronounced, and the reasons for it, apply to the Jews as a nation, as well as to the leader of the band who took Jesus.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Whole Psalm.—Is it possible that this perplexing and distressing Psalm presents us after all, not with David's maledictions upon his enemies, but with their maledictions upon him? Not only do I hold this interpretation to be quite legitimate, I hold it to be by far the more natural and reasonable interpretation.—*Joseph Hammond.*

[In Dr. Cox's *Expositor*, Vol. II. p. 225, this theory is well elaborated by Mr. Hammond, but we cannot for an instant accept it.—*C. H. S.*]

The Imprecations of the Psalm.—The language has been justified, not as the language of David, but as the language of Christ, exercising his office of Judge, or, in so far as he had laid aside that office during his earthly life, calling upon his Father to accomplish the curse. It has been alleged that this is the prophetic foreshadowing of the solemn words, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. xxvi. 24). The curse in the words of Chrysostom is, "a prophecy in the form of a curse," (*προφητεία ἐν εἴδει ἀρᾶς*).

The strain which such a view compels us to put on much of the language ought to have led long since to its abandonment. Not even the words denounced by our Lord against the Pharisees can really be compared to the anathemas which are here strung together. Much less is there any pretence for saying that those words so full of deep and holy sorrow, addressed to the traitor in the gospels, are merely another expression of the appalling denunciations of the psalm. But terrible as these undoubtedly are, to be accounted for by the spirit of the Old Dispensation, not to be defended by that of the New, still let us learn to estimate them aright.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

The Imprecations.—These imprecations are not appropriate in the mouth of the suffering Saviour. It is not the spirit of Zion but of Sinai which here speaks out of the mouth of David; the spirit of Elias, which, according to Luke ix. 58, is not the spirit of the New Testament. This wrathful spirit is overpowered by the spirit of love. But these anathemas are still not on this account so many beatings of the air. There is in them a divine energy, as in the blessing and cursing of every man who is united to God, and more especially of a man whose temper of mind is such as David's. They possess the same power as the prophetical threatenings, and in this sense they are regarded in the New Testament as fulfilled in the son of perdition (John xvii. 12). To the generation of the time of Jesus they were a deterrent warning not to offend against the Holy One of God, and this *Psalmus Ischariticus* (Acts i. 20) will ever be such a mirror of warning to the enemies and persecutors of Christ and his church.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

The Imprecations.—Respecting the imprecations contained in this psalm, it will be proper to keep in mind what I have said elsewhere, that when David forms such maledictions, or expresses his desire for them, he is not instigated by any immoderate carnal propensity, nor is he actuated by zeal without knowledge, nor is he influenced by any private personal considerations. These three matters must be carefully weighed, for in proportion to the amount of self-esteem which a man possesses, is he so enamoured with his own interests as to rush headlong upon revenge. Hence it comes to pass that the more a person is devoted to selfishness, he will be the more immoderately addicted to advancement of his own individual interests. This desire for the promotion of personal interest gives birth to another species of vice: for no one wishes to be avenged upon his enemies because such a thing would be right and equitable, but because it is the means of gratifying his own spiteful propensity. Some, indeed, make a pretext of righteousness and equity in the matter; but the spirit of malignity, by which they are inflamed, effaces every trace of justice, and blinds their minds.

When the two vices, selfishness and carnality, are corrected, there is still another thing demanding correction: we must repress the ardour of foolish zeal, in order that we may follow the Spirit of God as our guide. Should any one, under the influence of perverse zeal, produce David as an example of it, that would not be an example in point; for to such a person may be very aptly applied the answer which Christ returned to his disciples, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of," Luke ix. 55. How detestable a piece of sacrilege is it on the part of the monks, and especially the Franciscan friars, to pervert this psalm by employing it to countenance the most nefarious purposes! If a man harbour malice against a neighbour, it is quite a common thing for him to engage one of these wicked wretches to curse him, which he would do by daily repeating

this psalm. I know a lady in France who hired a parcel of these friars to curse her own and only son in these words. But I return to David, who, free from all inordinate passion, breathed forth his prayers under the influence of the Holy Spirit.—*John Calvin.*

The Imprecations.—It is possible, as Tholuck thinks, that in some of the utterances in what are called the *vindictive psalms*, especially the imprecations in Psalm cix., unholy personal zeal may have been mingled with holy zeal, as was the case seemingly with the two disciples James and John, when the Lord chided their desire for vengeance (Luke ix. 54—56). But, in reality, the feeling expressed in these psalms may well be considered as virtuous anger, such as Bishop Butler explains and justifies in his sermons on "Resentment and the Forgiveness of Injuries," and such as Paul teaches in Ephesians iv. 26, "Be ye angry, and sin not." Anger against sin and a desire that evildoers may be punished, are not opposed to the spirit of the gospel, or to that love of enemies which our Lord both enjoined and exemplified. If the emotion or its utterance were essentially sinful, how could Paul wish the enemy of Christ and the perverter of the gospel to be accursed (*ἀνάθεμα*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8); and especially, how could the spirit of the martyred saints in heaven call on God for vengeance (Rev. vi. 10), and join to celebrate its final execution (Rev. xix. 1—6)? Yea, resentment against the wicked is so far from being necessarily sinful, that we find it manifested by the Holy and Just One himself, when in the days of his flesh he looked around on his hearers "with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (Mark iii. 5); and when in "the great day of his wrath" (Rev. vi. 17), he shall say to "all workers of iniquity" (Luke xiii. 27), "Depart from me, ye cursed" (Matt. xxv. 41).—*Benjamin Davies* (1814—1875), *in Kitto's Cyclopædia.*

Imprecations.—It is true that this vengeance is invoked on the head of the betrayer of Christ: and we may profit by reading even the severest of the passages when we regard them as dictated by a burning zeal for the honour of Jehovah, a righteous indignation and a jealousy of love, and generally, if not universally, as denunciations of just judgment against the obstinate enemies of Christ, and all who obey not the Gospel of God. At the same time, these passages cannot be fully accounted for without a frank recognition of the fact that the Psalter was conceived and written under the Old Covenant. That dispensation was more stern than ours. God's people had with all other peoples a conflict with sword and spear. They wanted to tread down their enemies, to crush the heathen; and thought it a grand religious triumph for a righteous man to wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. Ps. lviii. 10; lxviii. 23. Now the struggle is without carnal weapons, and the tone of the dispensation is changed.—*Donald Fraser*, 1873.

Imprecations.—Imprecations of judgment on the wicked *on the hypothesis of their continued impenitence* are not inconsistent with simultaneous efforts to bring them to repentance; and Christian charity itself can do no more than labour for the sinner's conversion. The law of holiness requires us to pray for the fires of divine retribution: the law of love to seek meanwhile to rescue the brand from the burning. The last prayer of the martyr Stephen was answered not by any general averting of doom from a guilty nation, but by the conversion of an individual persecutor to the service of God.—*Joseph Francis Thrupp.*

Imprecations.—That explanation which regards the "enemies" as spiritual foes has a large measure of truth. It commended itself to a mind so far removed from mysticism as Arnold's. It is most valuable for devout private use of the Psalter. For, though we are come to Mount Sion, crested with the eternal calm, the opened ear can hear the thunder rolling along the peaks of Sinai. In the Gospel, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. Sin is utterly hateful to God. The broad gates are flung wide open of the city that lies foursquare towards all the winds of heaven; for its ruler is divinely tolerant. But there shall in no wise enter

it anything that defileth, neither whatever worketh abomination; for he is divinely intolerant too. And thus when, in public or private, we read these Psalms of imprecation, there is a lesson that comes home to us. We must read them, or dishonour God's word. Reading them, we must depart from sin, or pronounce judgment upon ourselves. Drunkenness, impurity, hatred, every known sin of flesh or spirit—these, and not mistaken men, are the worst enemies of God and of his Christ. Against these we pray in our Collects for Peace at Morning and Evening prayer—"Defend us in all assaults of our enemies, that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness." These were the dark hosts which swept through the Psalmist's vision when he cried, "Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed," Ps. vi. 10.—*William Alexander, in "The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity,"* 1877.

Imprecations.—I cannot forbear the following little incident that occurred the other morning at family worship. I happened to be reading one of the imprecatory psalms, and as I paused to remark, my little boy, a lad of ten years, asked with some earnestness: "Father, do you think it right for a good man to pray for the destruction of his enemies like that?" and at the same time referred me to Christ as praying for his enemies. I paused a moment to know how to shape the reply so as to fully meet and satisfy his enquiry, and then said, "My son, if an assassin should enter the house by night, and murder your mother, and then escape, and the sheriff and citizens were all out in pursuit, trying to catch him, would you not pray to God that they might succeed and arrest him, and that he might be brought to justice?" "Oh, yes!" said he, "but I never saw it so before. I did not know that that was the meaning of these Psalms." "Yes," said I, "my son, the men against whom David prays were bloody men, men of falsehood and crime, enemies to the peace of society, seeking his own life, and unless they were arrested and their wicked devices defeated, many innocent persons must suffer." The explanation perfectly satisfied his mind.—*F. G. Hibbard, in "The Psalms chronologically arranged,"* 1856.

Title.—It is worth noting, that the superscription, "*to the chief Musician,*" to the precentor (לַמְנַצֵּחַ), proves it to have been designed, such as it is, for the Tabernacle or Temple service of song.—*Joseph Hammond, in "The Expositor,"* 1875.

Title.—Syriac inscription.—The verbs of the Hebrew text through nearly the whole of the imprecatory part of this Psalm are read in the singular number, as if some particular subject were signified by the divine prophet. But our translators always change the verbs into the plural number; which is not done by the Seventy and the other translators, who adhere more closely to the Hebrew text. But without doubt this has arisen, because the Syriac Christians explain this Psalm of the sufferings of Christ, which may be understood from the Syriac inscription of this Psalm, and which in Polyglottis Angl. reads thus:—"*Of David: when they made Absolom king, he not knowing: and on account of this he was killed. But to us it sets forth the sufferings of Christ.*" For this reason all these imprecations are transferred to the enemies or murderers of Jesus Christ.—*John Augustus Dathe,* 1731—1791.

Verse 1.—"*Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise.*" All commendation or manifestation of our innocence is to be sought from God when we are assailed with calumnies on all sides. When God is silent, we should cry all the more strongly; nor should we because of such delay despair of help, nor impatiently cease from praying.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 1.—"*Hold not thy peace.*" How appropriately this phrase is applied to God, with whom *to speak* is the same as *to do;* for by his word he made all things. Rightly, therefore, is he said to be silent when he seems not to notice the things which are done by the wicked, and patiently bears with their malice.

The Psalmist begs him to rise up and speak with the wicked in his wrath, and thus take deserved vengeance on them; which is as easy for him to do as for an angry man to break forth in words of rebuke and blame. This should be to us a great solace against the wickedness of this last age, which God, our praise, can restrain with one little word.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 1.—"*O God.*" As the most innocent and holy servants of God are subject to heavy slanders and false calumnies raised against them, so the best remedy and relief in this case is to go to God, as here the Psalmist doth.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"*God of my praise.*" Thou, who art the constant object of my praise and thanksgiving, Jer. xvii. 14.—*William Keatinge Clay.*

Verse 1.—"*O God of my praise.*" In denominating him *the God of his praise*, he intrusts to him the vindication of his innocence, in the face of the calumnies by which he was all but universally assailed.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 1.—"*The God of* MY *praise.*" Give me leave, in order to expound it the better, to expostulate. What, David, were there no saints but thyself that gave praise to God? Why dost thou then seem to appropriate and engross God unto thyself, as the God of thy praise, as if none praised him else but thee? It is because his soul had devoted all the praise he was able to bestow on any, unto the Lord alone; as whom he had set himself to praise, and praise alone. As of a beloved son we use to say, "the son of my love." And further, it is as if he had said, If I had all the ability of all the spirits of men and angels wherewith to celebrate him, I would bestow them all on him, he is the God of my praise. And as he was David's, so he should be ours.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 2.—"*For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me.*" Speak, says Arnobius, to thine own conscience, O man of God, thou who art following Christ; and when the mouth of the wicked and deceitful man is opened concerning thee, rejoice and be secure; because while the mouth of the wicked is opened for thy slander in the earth, the mouth of God is opened for thy praise in heaven.—*Lorinus.*

Verses 2, 3.—Note, first, the detractor opens his mouth, that he may pour forth his poison, and that he may devour his victim. Hence, David says, "the mouth of the wicked is opened against me." Note, secondly, the detractor is talkative—"*They have spoken,*" etc. The mouth of the detractor is a broken pitcher leaking all over. Note, thirdly, detraction springs from hatred, "they compassed me about also *with words of hatred.*" In Greek, *ἐκύκλωσάν με, i.e.*, as in a circle they have enclosed me. St. Climacus says, "Detraction is *odii partus*, a subtle disease, a fat but hidden leech which sucks the blood of charity and after destroys it."—*Lorinus.*

Verses 2—5.—"*The mouth of the wicked,*" etc.

> Vice—deformed
> Itself, and ugly, and of flavour rank—
> To rob fair Virtue of so sweet an incense
> And with it to anoint and salve its own
> Rotten ulcers, and perfume the path that led
> To death, strove daily by a thousand means:
> And oft succeeded to make Virtue sour
> In the world's nostrils, and its loathly self
> Smell sweetly. Rumour was the messenger
> Of defamation, and so swift that none
> Could be the first to tell an evil tale.
> . . . . . .
> 'Twas Slander filled her mouth with lying words;
> Slander, the foulest whelp of Sin. The man
> In whom this spirit entered was undone.
> His tongue was set on fire of hell; his heart
> Was black as death; his legs were faint with haste
> To propagate the lie his tongue had framed

His pillow was the peace of families
Destroyed, the sigh of innocence reproached,
Broken friendships, and the strife of brotherhoods.
Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
Number the midnight watches, on his bed
Devising mischief more; and early rose
And made most hellish meals of good men's names.

. . . . . .

Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made
His haunts; and, like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots and blooms
Of social joy and happiness decayed.
Fools only in his company were seen,
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
Given up. The prudent man shunned him and his house
As one who had a deadly moral plague.

—*Robert Pollok.*

Verse 3.—Although an individual may be absent, so that he cannot corporeally be encompassed and fought with; nevertheless, so great is the force and malice of an envenomed tongue, that an absent man may be none the less dangerously surrounded and warred against. Thus David, though absent and driven into exile, was nevertheless surrounded and assailed by the calumnies of Doeg and the other flatterers of Saul, so that at length he was also corporeally surrounded; in which contest he would clearly have perished unless he had been divinely delivered: see 1 Sam. xxiii. And this kind of surrounding and assault is so much the more deadly as it is so much the less possible to be avoided. For who can be so innocent as to escape the snares of a backbiting and calumnious tongue? What place can be so remote and obscure as that this evil will not intrude when David could not be safe in the mountains and caves of the rocks?—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—None prove worse enemies than those that have received the greatest kindnesses, when once they turn unkind. As the sharpest vinegar is made of the purest wine, and pleasant meats turn to the bitterest humours in the stomach; so the highest love bestowed upon friends, being ill digested or corrupt, turns to the most unfriendly hatred, *proximorum odia sunt acerrima.—Abraham Wright.*

Verse 4.—"*For my love they are my adversaries*"; that's an ill requital; but how did David requite them? We may take his own word for it; he tells us how, "*But I give myself unto prayer*"; yea, he seemed a man wholly given unto prayer. The elegant conciseness of the Hebrew is, "*But I prayer*"; we supply it thus, "*But I give myself unto prayer.*" They are sinning against me, requiting my love with hatred, "*But I give myself unto prayer.*" But for whom did he pray? Doubtless he prayed and prayed much for himself; he prayed also for them. We may understand these words, "*I give myself unto prayer,*" two ways. First I pray against their plots and evil dealings with me (prayer was David's best strength always against his enemies), yet that was not all. But, secondly, "*I give myself unto prayer,*" that the Lord would pardon their sin, and turn their hearts, when they are doing me mischief; or, though they have done me mischief, I am wishing them the best good. David (in another place) showed what a spirit of charity he was clothed with, when no reproof could hinder him from praying for others, Ps. cxli. 5.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4.—The translator of the Syriac version has inserted in the 4th verse ܘܐܢܐ ܡܨܠܐ ܗܘܝܬ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ "*and I have prayed for them,*" as if he had copied them from the words of our Lord in Matt. v. 44, where in the Syriac version of the New Testament we have exactly the same construction. It is in keeping with the inscription of the Psalm, which applies it directly to Christ. It would seem as if the Translator understood this verse of the crucifixion and

of the Redeemer's prayer for his murderers, or as if the only way to understand the elliptical language of the Psalmist was from the teaching and example of our Lord.—*E. T. Gibson, of Crayford.*

Verse 4.—"*I prayer.*" The Messiah says in this prophetic psalm, "*I am prayer.*" During his pilgrimage on earth, his whole life was communion with God; and now in his glory, he is constantly making intercession for us. But this does not exhaust the idea, "*I am prayer.*" He not merely prayed and is now praying, he not merely teaches and influences us to pray, but he *is* prayer, the fountain and source of all prayer, as well as the foundation and basis of all answers to our petitions. He is the Word in this sense also. From all eternity his Father heard him, heard him as interceding for that world which, created through him, he represented, and in which, through him, divine glory was to be revealed. In the same sense, therefore, in which he is light and gives light, in which he is life and resurrection, and therefore quickens, Jesus *is* prayer.—*Adolph Saphir, in Lectures on the Lord's Prayer*, 1870.

Verse 4.—Persecuted saints are men of prayer, yea, they are as it were made up all of prayer. David prayed before; but, oh, when his enemies fell a persecuting of him, then he gave himself up wholly to prayer. Oh, then he was more earnest, more fervent, more frequent, more diligent, more constant, and more abundant in the work of prayer! When Numa, king of the Romans, was told that his enemies were in arms against him, he did but laugh at it, and answered, "And I do sacrifice"; so when persecutors arm themselves against the people of God, they do but divinely smile and laugh at it, and give themselves the more up to prayer. When men arm against them, then they arm themselves with all their might to the work of prayer; and woe, woe to them that have armies of prayers marching against them.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 4.—"*I give myself unto prayer.*" The instruction to ourselves from these words is most comforting and precious. Are we bowed down with sorrow and distress? "*I give myself unto prayer.*" Are we persecuted, and reviled, and compassed about with words of hatred? "*I give myself unto prayer.*" Has death entered our dwellings? and as we gaze in heart-broken anguish on the no longer answering look of one who was our earthly stay, and we feel as if all hope as well as all help were gone, still there remains the same blessed refuge for all the Lord's sorrowing ones, "*I give myself unto prayer.*" In the allegory of the ancients, Hope was left at the bottom of the casket, as the sweetener of human life; but God, in far richer mercy, gives prayer as the balm of human trial.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 4.—A Christian is all over prayer: he prays at rising, at lying down, and as he walks: like a prime favorite at court, who has the key to the privy stairs, and can wake his prince by night.—*Augustus Montague Toplady*, 1740—1778.

Verse 6.—"*Set thou a wicked man over him,*" etc. Here commences that terrible series of maledictions, unparelleled in Holy Writ, as directed against an individual sinner, albeit it is little more than a special reduplication of the national woes denounced in Leviticus xxvi. and Deuteronomy xxviii.—*Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 6.—"*Set thou a wicked man over him.*" The first thing that the Psalmist asks is, that his foe might be subjected to the evil of having a man placed over him like himself:—a man regardless of justice, truth, and right; a man who would respect character and propriety no more than he had himself done. It is, in fact, a prayer that he might be punished *in the line of his offences.* It cannot be wrong that a man should be treated as he treats others; and it cannot be in itself wrong to desire that a man should be treated according to his character and deserts, for this is the object of all law, and this is what all magistrates and legislators are endeavouring to secure.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 6.—"*Over* HIM." Consider what would have been the effect if these denunciations had been made against the *sins* of men and not, as they are in these

passages, against the *sinners*. Men would have said, "My sin is denounced, not *me*." What a license would have been given to sin! The depraved nature would have said, "if *I* am not condemned, but only my *sin*, I can do as I like; I shall not be called to account for it. I *love* sin and can go on in it." This is what men would have said. There would have been no effort to get rid of it. Why should there be, if only *sin* is condemned and not the *sinner?* But man's *sin* is identified with *himself*, and this makes him tremble. God's wrath rests on *him* because of his sin. Condemnation is awaiting *him* because of his sin. This makes him anxious to get rid of it.—*Frederick Whitfield.*

Verse 6.—"*Let Satan stand at his right hand.*" It appears to have been the custom at trials before the Jewish tribunals for a pleader to stand at the right hand of the accused: See Zech. iii. 1, where are described Joshua the High Priest, standing before the Angel of Jehovah, and the adversary (שָׂטָן, *Satan*, as here) standing at his right hand to oppose him. See also verse 31.—*John Le Clerc*, 1657—1736.

Verse 6.—"*Let Satan stand at his right hand.*" Hugo observes that the Devil is on the left hand of those whom he persecutes in temporal things: on the right of those whom he rules in spiritual things: before the face of those who are on their guard against his wiles: behind those who are not foreseeing and prudent: above those whom he treads down: below, and beneath the feet of those who tread him down. A recent Spanish author, * writing in that language, thinks that there cannot be anything worse than that man who diligently and of set purpose injures others by speaking deceitfully, by surrounding with speeches of hatred, by attacking without cause, by slandering, by returning evil for good, and hatred for love: therefore, in this place it is desired that a wicked man may be set over such a one, and the devil at his right hand; as if he should be doomed to take the lowest place because he is the worst.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 6.—"*At his right hand.*" The strength or force of the body shows itself principally in the right hand. Therefore, he who wishes to obstruct another, and to hinder his endeavour, stands at his right hand; and thus easily parries his stroke or attempt. This I consider to be the most simple meaning of this passage which shows that God represses and restrains the ragings of the enemies of the Church, who withstand each other by their opposing efforts, either from envy or from other causes. Thus, 2 Sam. xvii., the counsels of Ahithophel are broken by Hushai; and in our day we see that the counsels and attempts of our enemies have been frequently and wonderfully restrained by the hindrances they have give one to the other: in which matter the goodness of God is to be discerned.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 6.—He beginneth to prophesy what they should receive for their great impiety, detailing their lot in such a manner as if he wished its realization from a desire of revenge: while he declareth what was to happen with the most absolute certainty, and what of God's justice would worthily come upon such. Some not understanding this mode of predicting the future under the appearance of wishing evil, suppose hatred to be returned for hatred, and an evil will for an evil will: since in truth it belongeth to few to distinguish in what way the punishment of the wicked pleaseth the accuser, who longeth to satiate his enmity; and in how widely different a way it pleaseth the judge, who with a righteous mind punisheth sins. For the former returneth evil for evil, but the judge when he punisheth doth not return evil for evil, since he returneth justice to the unjust; and what is just is surely good. He therefore punisheth not from delight in another's misery, which is evil for evil, but from love of justice, which is good for evil. Let not then the blind pervert the light of the Scriptures, imagining that God doth not punish sins: nor let the wicked flatter themselves, as if he rendered evil for evil. Let us therefore hear the sequel of this divine composition; and in the words of one who seemeth to wish ill, let

* *Peter Vega.* On the Penitential Psalms.

us recognise the predictions of a prophet; and let us see God making a just retribution, raising our mind up to his eternal laws.—*Augustine.*

Verses 6—19.—These terrible curses are repeated with many words and sentences, that we may know that David has not let these words fall rashly or from any precipitate impulse of mind; but, the Holy Spirit having dictated, he employs this form of execration that it may be a perpetual prophecy or prediction of the bitter pains and destruction of the enemies of the Church of God. Nor does David imprecate these punishments so much on his own enemies and Judas the betrayer of Christ; but that similar punishments await all who fight against the kingdom of Christ.—*Mollerus.*

Verses 6—20.—I had also this consideration, that if I should now venture all for God, I engaged God to take care of my concernments; but if I forsook him and his ways for fear of any trouble that should come to me or mine, then I should not only falsify my profession, but should count also that my concernments were not so sure, if left at God's feet, while I stood to and for his name, as they would be if they were under my own tuition [or care] though with the denial of the way of God. This was a smarting consideration, and was as spurs unto my flesh. This Scripture [Ps. cix. 6—20.] also greatly helped it to fasten the more upon me, where Christ prays against Judas, that God would disappoint him in all his selfish thoughts, which moved him to sell his master: pray read it soberly. I had also another consideration, and that was, the dread of the torments of hell, which I was sure they must partake of, that for fear of the cross to shrink from their profession of Christ, his words, and laws, before the sons of men. I thought also of the glory that he had prepared for those that, in faith, and love, and patience, stood to his ways before them. These things, I say, have helped me, when the thoughts of the misery that both myself and mine might for the sake of my profession be exposed to hath lain pinching on my mind.—*John Bunyan.*

Verse 7.—"*Let his prayer become sin.*" As the clamours of a condemned malefactor, not only find no acceptance, but are looked upon as an affront to the court. The prayers of the wicked now become sin, because soured with the leaven of hypocrisy and malice; and so they will in the great day, because then it will be too late to cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us."—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—"*Let his prayer become sin.*" Evidently his prayer in reference to his *trial* for crime; his prayer that he might be acquitted and discharged. Let it be seen in the result that such a prayer was *wrong;* that it was in fact, a prayer for the discharge of a bad man—a man who *ought* to be punished. Let it be seen to be what a prayer *would* be if offered for a murderer, or violator of the law,—a prayer that he might escape or not be punished. All must see that *such* a prayer would be wrong, or would be a "sin"; and so, in his own case, it would be equally true that a prayer *for his own escape* would be "sin." The Psalmist asks that, by the result of the trial, such a prayer might be *seen* to be in fact a prayer for the protection and escape of a *bad man.* A just sentence in the case would demonstrate this; and this is what the Psalmist prays for.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 7.—"*Let his prayer become sin.*" Kimchi in his annotations thus explains these words: *i.e.*, "let it be without effect, so that he does not get what he asks for; let him not hit the mark at which he aims: for חָטָא sometimes has the meaning "*to miss.*"—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 7.—"*Let his prayer become sin.*" St. Jerome says that Judas's prayer was turned into sin, by reason of his want of hope when he prayed: and thus it was that in despair he hanged himself.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 7.—"*Let his prayer become sin.*" The prayer of the hypocrite is sin formally, and it is sin in the effect, that is, instead of getting any good by it, he gets hurt, and the Lord instead of helping him because he prayeth, punisheth him because of the sinfulness of his prayers. Thus his prayer becomes sin to him, because he receives no more respect from God when he prays than when

he sins. And sin doth not only mingle with his prayer (as it doth with the prayers of the holiest), but his prayer is nothing else but a mixture or mingle-mangle (as we speak) of many sins.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 7.—"*Let his prayer become sin.*" We should be watchful in prayer lest the most holy worship of God should become an abomination: Isaiah i. 15; lxvi. 3; James iv. 3; Hosea vii. 14; Amos v. 23. If the remedy be poisoned, how shall the diseased be cured?—*Martin Geier.*

Verses 7—19.—These and the following verses, although they contain terrible imprecations, will become less dreadful if we understand them as spoken concerning men pertinaciously cleaving to their vices, against whom only has God threatened punishments; not against those who repent with all their heart, and become thoroughly changed in life.—*John Le Clerc.*

Verse 8.—"*Let his days be few.*" By "*his days*," he meant the days of his apostleship, which were few; since before the passion of our Lord, they were ended by his crime and death. And as if it were asked, What then shall become of that most sacred number twelve, within which our Lord willed, not without a meaning, to limit his twelve first apostles? he at once addeth, "*and let another take his office.*" As much as to say, let both himself be punished according to his desert, and let his number be filled up. And if any one desire to know how this was done, let him read the Acts of the Apostles.—*Augustine.*

Verse 8.—"*Let another take his office.*" So every man acts, and practically prays, who seeks to remove a bad and corrupt man from office. As such an office must be filled by some one, all the efforts which he puts forth to remove a wicked man tend to bring it about that "another should take his office," and for this it is *right* to labour and pray. The act does not of itself imply malignity or bad feeling, but is consistent with the purest benevolence, the kindest feelings, the strictest integrity, the sternest patriotism, and the highest form of piety.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 9.—"*Let his children be fatherless.*" Helpless and shiftless. A sore vexation to many on their death-beds, and just enough upon graceless persecutors. But happy are they who, when they lie a-dying, can say as Luther did, "*Domine Deus gratias ago tibi quod volueris me esse pauperem, et mendicum*, &c. Lord God, I thank thee for my present poverty, but future hopes. I have not an house, lands, possessions, or monies to leave behind me. Thou hast given me wife and children; behold, I return them back to thee, and beseech thee to nourish them, teach them, keep them safe, as hitherto thou hast done, O thou father of the fatherless, and judge of widows.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 9, 10, 12, 13.—"*His children;*" "*his posterity.*" Though in matters of a civil or judicial character, we have it upon the highest authority that the children are not to be made accountable for the fathers, nor the fathers for the children, but every transgressor is to bear the penalty of his own sin; yet, in a moral, and in a social and spiritual sense, it is impossible that the fathers should eat sour grapes, and yet that the children's teeth should not be set on edge. The offspring of the profligate and the prodigal may, and often do, avoid the specific vices of the parent; but rarely, if ever, do they escape the evil consequences of those vices. And this re-action cannot be prevented, until it shall please God first to unmake and then to remodel his whole intelligent creation.—*T. Dale, in a Sermon to Heads of Families*, 1839.

Verses 9—13.—Under the Old Covenant, calamity, extending from father to son, was the meed of transgression; prosperity, *vice versa*, of obedience: (see Solomon's prayer, 2 Chro. vi. 23): and these prayers of the psalmist (cf. Pss. x. 13, xii. 1, lviii. 10, etc.) may express the wish that God's providential government of his people should be asserted in the chastisement of the enemy of God and man.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

Verse 10.—"*Let his children be continually vagabonds.*" The word used in the sentence pronounced upon *Cain*, Gen. iv. 12. Compare Ps. lix. 11, 15.—*William Kay.*

Verse 10.—"*Let them seek,*" etc. Horsley renders this clause, "*Let them be driven out from the very ruins of their dwellings,*" and remarks that the image is that of "vagabonds seeking a miserable shelter among the ruins of decayed or demolished buildings, and not suffered to remain even in such places undisturbed."

Verses 9, 10.—When we consider of whom this Psalm is used there will be no difficulty about it. No language could be more awful than that of verses 6 to 19. It embraces almost every misery we can think of. But could any man be in a more wretched condition than Judas was? Could any words be too severe to express the depth of his misery—of him, who, for three whole years, had been the constant attendant of the Saviour of mankind; who had witnessed his miracles, and had shared his miraculous powers; who had enjoyed all the warnings, all the reproofs of his love, and then had betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver? Can we conceive a condition more miserable than that of Judas? And this psalm is *a prophecy of the punishment* that should overtake him for his sin. S. Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles, quotes part of this psalm, and applies it to Judas: he applies it as a prophecy of the punishment he should suffer on the betrayal of the Son of God.

It is probable that in this psalm, when it uses the word children, it does not mean those who are his off-spring by natural descent, but those *who resemble him*, and *who partake with him in his wickedness.* This is a common meaning of the word sons, or children, in Holy Scripture. As where our blessed Lord tells the Jews, "*Ye are of your father the devil,*" he could not mean that the Jews were the natural descendants of the devil, but that they were his children because they did his works. Again, when they are called Abraham's children, it means those who do the works of Abraham. So in this psalm, where it is foretold that fearful punishment should happen to Judas for the betrayal of his Lord, and should be extended to his children, it means *his associates, his companions, and imitators in wickedness.—F. H. Dunwell, in "A Tract on the Commination Service,"* 1853.

Verses 10, 12, 13.—It is for public ends that the psalmist prayed that the families of the wicked might be involved in their ruin. These are very terrible petitions; but it is God, not man, who has appointed these calamities as the ordinary consequences of persistence in wickedness. It is God, not man, who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generations. It is because this is the ordinary portion of the transgressors, and *that thus in God's wonted way his abhorrence of the transgressions* of his enemies might be marked, that the psalmist prays for these calamities. He asks God to do what he had declared he would do, and this for public ends, for he says: "I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him *among the multitude.* For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul," verses 30, 31.—*R. A. Bertram, in "The Imprecatory Psalms,"* 1867.

Verses 10–13.—Many penurious fathers are so scraping for their children, that they ravish the poor children of God; but the hand of the Lord shall be against their young lions. Nah. ii. 13. They join house to house, and field to field, but their children shall be "*vagabonds and beg,*" "*seeking their bread out of their desolate places.*" How many a covetous mole is now digging a house in the earth for his posterity, and never dreams of this sequel, that God should make those children beggars, for whose sake their fathers had made so many beggars! This is a quittance which the sire will not believe, but as sure as God is just the son shall feel. Now if he had but leave to come out of hell for an hour, and see this, how should he curse his folly! Sure, if possible, it would double the pain of his infernal torture. Be moderate, then, ye that so insatiately devour, as if you had an infinite capacity; you overload your

stomachs, it is fit they should be disburdened in shameful spewing. How quickly doth a worldly-minded man grow a defrauder, from a defrauder to a usurer, from a usurer to an oppressor, from an oppressor to an extortioner! if his eyes do but tell his heart of a booty, his heart will charge his hand, and he must have it, Micah ii. 2. They do but see it, like it, and take it. Observe their due payment. "*Let the extortioner catch all that he hath*": they got all by extortion, they shall lose all by extortion. They spoiled their neighbours, strangers shall spoil them. How often hath the poor widow and orphan cried, wept, groaned to them for mercy, and found none! They have taught God how to deal with themselves; "*let there be none to extend mercy to them.*" They have advanced houses for a memorial, and dedicated lands to their own names, Ps. xlix. 11; all to get them a name; and even in this they shall be crossed: "*In the next generation their name shall be quite put out.*"—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 11.—"*Let the extortioner catch all that he hath.*" Note: he is most miserable who falls into the hands of usurers; for they will flay him alive and drain his blood. The Romans, that they might deter the citizens from usury, placed a statue of Marsyas in the Forum or law-court, by which they signified that those who came into the hands of usurers would be skinned alive; and to show that usurers, as the most unjust litigants, deserved hanging, they placed a rope in the hand of the figure.—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 11.—"*Catch.*" This refers to the obligations between creditors and debtors, and he calls these snares, by which, as it were, the insolvent debtors are caught, and at last come to servitude.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 12.—"*Let there be none to extend mercy to him.*" He does not say, None who shall shew, but none who shall "*extend*" kindness to him. The extending of kindness is, when after a friend's death it is shown to his children, and true friendship is of this sort, that the kindness which friends shewed to each other while alive is maintained, not extinguished with the death of the friend.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 12.—"*Let there be none to extend mercy to him.*" Let God in his justice set off all hearts from him that had been so unreasonably merciless. Thus no man opened his mouth to intercede for Haman; Judas was shaken off by the priests, and bid *see to himself*, etc.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 15.—"*Let them be before the Lord continually.*" The fearful punishment of sinners is, to be always under the eye of an angry God: then the soul of the sinner is dismayed at its own deformity.—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 15.—"*Let them be before the Lord continually.*" Lafayette, the friend and ally of Washington, was in his youth confined in a French dungeon. In the door of his cell there was cut a small hole, just big enough for a man's eye; at that hole a sentinel was placed, whose duty it was to watch, moment by moment, till he was relieved by a change of guard. All Lafayette saw was the winking eye, but the eye was always there; look when he would, it met his gaze. In his dreams, he was conscious it was staring at him. "Oh," he says, "it was horrible; there was no escape; when he lay down and when he rose up, when he ate and when he read, that eye searched him."—"*New Cyclopædia of Illustrative Anecdote,*" 1875.

Verses 15—19, 29.—Strict justice, and nothing more, breathes in every petition. Cannot you say, Amen! to all these petitions? Are you not glad when the wicked man falls into the ditch he has made for another's destruction, and when his mischief returns upon his own head? But you say, "These petitions are unquestionably just, but why did not the psalmist ask, not for justice, but for *mercy?*" The answer is, that in his public capacity, he was bound to think first about justice.

No government could stand upon the basis of forgiveness, justice must

always go before mercy. Suppose that in the course of the next session Parliament should decree that henceforth, instead of justice being shown to thieves, by sending them to prison, they should be treated charitably, and compelled to restore *one-half* of what they stole, what would honest men say about the government? The thieves would doubtless be very complimentary, but what would honest men say? Why, they would say the government had altogether failed of its function, and it would not live to be a week older. And just so, the psalmists were bound first of all to seek for the vindication and establishment of justice and truth. Like the magistrates of to-day, they considered first the well-being of the community. This they had in view in all the calamities they sought to bring upon wrong-doers.—*R. A. Bertram.*

Verse 16.—"*Because.*" Why, what is the crime? "*Because that he remembered not to shew mercy,*" etc. See what a long vial full of the plagues of God is poured out upon the unmerciful man!—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 16.—"*But persecuted the poor.*" If any man will practise subtraction against the poor, God will use it against him, and take his name out of the book of life. If he be damned that gives not his own, what shall become of him that takes away another man's? (*Augustine.*) If judgment without mercy shall be to him that shows no mercy (Jam. ii. 13) where shall subtraction and rapine appear? "*Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let strangers spoil his labour,*" ver. 11: there is one subtraction, his estate. "*Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out,*" ver. 13: there is another subtraction, his memory. "*Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children,*" ver. 12: there is another subtraction, a denial of all pity to him and his, "*Let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin,*" ver. 7: there is another subtraction, no audience from heaven. "*Let another take his office;*" there is a subtraction of his place: "*let his days be few,*" ver. 8: there is a subtraction of his life. "*Let him be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous,*" Ps. lxix., 28; there is the last, the subtraction of his soul. This is a fearful arithmetic: if the wicked add sins, God will add plagues. If they subtract from others their rights, God shall subtract from them his mercies.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 17.—*Cursing* is both good and bad. For we read in the Scriptures that holy men have often cursed. Indeed none can offer the Lord's Prayer rightly without cursing. For when he prays, "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done," etc., he must include in the same outpouring of his desires all that is opposed to these, and say, cursed and execrated and dishonoured must all other names be, and all kingdoms which are opposed to thee must be destroyed and rent in pieces, and all devices and purposes formed against thee fall to the ground.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 17.—"*As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.*"

He was a wolf in clothing of the lamb,
That stole into the fold of God, and on
The blood of souls, which he did sell to death,
Grew fat; and yet, when any would have turned
Him out, he cried, "Touch not the priest of God."
And that he was anointed, fools believed;
But knew, that day, he was the devil's priest,
Anointed by the hands of Sin and Death,
And set peculiarly apart to ill—
While on him smoked the vials of perdition,
Poured measureless. Ah, me! What cursing then
Was heaped upon his head by ruined souls,
That charged him with their murder, as he stood
With eye, of all the unredeemed, most sad,
Waiting the coming of the Son of Man!

—*Robert Pollok.*

Verses 17—19.—Possibly verses 17 and 18 describe as fact what verse 19 amplifies in a wish, or prayer. "He loved cursing, and it loved him in return, and came to him: he delighted not in blessing, and it was far from him. He clothed himself with cursing as with a garment, and it permeated his inmost parts as water, as the refreshing oil with which the body is anointed finds a way into marrow and bones." The images are familiar; the daily dress, the water that permeates daily every part of the body, the oil used daily for nourishment (Ps. civ. 15) and gladness (Ps. xxiii. 5). In the wish that follows (verse 19), the mantle, or *garment*, which is always worn, and the girdle or belt with which the accursed one is always girded, are substituted, apparently, for more general terms.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

Verses 17—19.—As the loss of the soul is a loss peculiar to itself, and a loss double, so it is a loss most fearful, because it is attended with the most heavy curse of God. This curse lieth in a deprivation of all good, and in a being swallowed up of all the most fearful miseries that a holy and just and eternal God can righteously inflict, or lay upon the soul of a sinful man. Now let reason here come in and exercise itself in the most exquisite manner; yea, let him now count up all, and all manner of curses and torments that a reasonable and an immortal soul is, or can be made capable of, and able to suffer, and when he has done, he shall come infinitely short of this great anathema, this master curse which God has reserved amongst his treasuries, and intends to bring out in that day of battle and war, which he proposeth to make upon damned souls in that day. And this God will do, partly as a retaliation, as the former, and partly by way of revenge. 1. By way of retaliation: "*As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.*" Again, "*As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.*" "*Let this,*" saith Christ, "*be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord,*" etc. 2. As this curse comes by way of retaliation, so it cometh by way of revenge. God will right the wrongs that sinners have done him, will repay vengeance for the despite and reproach wherewith they have affronted him, and will revenge the quarrel of his covenant. As the beginnings of revenges are terrible (Deut. xxxii. 41, 42); what, then, will the whole execution be, when he shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ? And, therefore, this curse is executed in wrath, in jealousy, in anger, in fury; yea, the heavens and the earth shall be burned up with the fire of that jealousy in which the great God will come when he cometh to curse the souls of sinners, and when he cometh to defy the ungodly, 2 Thess. i. 7—9.—*John Bunyan.*

Verse 18.—The three figures in this verse are climatic: he has clothed himself in cursing, he has drunk it in like water (Job xv. 16, xxxiv. 7), it has penetrated to the marrow of his bones, like the oily preparations which are rubbed in and penetrate to the bones.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 18.—We must not pass this verse without remarking that there is an allusion in its tone to Num. v. 21, 22, 24—the unfaithful wife. Her curse was to penetrate into her bowels; "the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her"; and such a curse comes on unfaithful Judas, who violates his engagement to the Lord, and upon Israel at large also, who have departed from him "as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband," and have committed adultery against the Bridegroom.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verses 18, 19.—Peter, in Acts i. 20, applies this psalm to Christ when the Jews cried, "His blood be upon us and upon our children"; then did they put on the envenomed garment which has tormented them ever since. It is girded about their loins; the curse has penetrated like water, and entered the very bones like oil. How awful will be the state of those who crucify him afresh, and again put him to open shame.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 21.—"*For thy name's sake.*" My enemies would soon become my friends and my protectors, if I would but renounce my allegiance to thee; my refusal to disobey thee constitutes all my crime in their eyes. My cause, therefore, becomes thine, it will be to thy glory to declare thyself on my side, lest the impious should take occasion from my sufferings to blaspheme thy holy name, as if thou hadst not the power to deliver, or wert utterly indifferent to those who, renouncing all human help, have put their confidence in thee.—*Jean Baptiste Massillon.*

Verse 21.—"*For thy name's sake.*" He does not say, For *my* name, that it may be vindicated from reproach and shame: but for *Thy* name; as if he would say, whatever I may be, O Lord, and whatever may befall me, have respect to Thy name, have regard to it only. I am not worthy, that I should seek Thy help, but Thy name is worthy which thou mayest vindicate from contempt. We learn here with what passion for the glory of the divine name they ought to be animated, who are peculiarly consecrated to the name of God.

He does not say, "Because my case is good," but "*because thy mercy is good.*" Note this also, he does not simply say, Because thou art good, or because thou art merciful; but because thy mercy is good. He had experienced a certain special goodness in the Divine mercy; *i.e.*, such timeliness, kind readiness in all afflictions, and help for every kind of affliction prepared and provided. On this he rests hope and confidence, in this takes refuge. All those are truly happy who have had experience of this mercy, and can depend on it with firm hope and confidence.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 21.—Unto a truly broken, humbled sinner, the mercies that are in God, out of which he pardons, should have infinitely more of goodness and sweetness in them than the pardon itself, or all things else that are in the promises. This a soul that hath tasted how good the Lord is will instantly acknowledge. A promise of life to a condemned man is sweet, for life is sweet, as we say; but "thy lovingkindness," said David, who had tasted how good the Lord is, "is better than life," and infinitely sweeter, Ps. lxiii. 3. And again says David, "*Because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.*" Deliverance was good; yea, but the mercy of God apprehended therewith was infinitely more good to him, which was the greatest inducement to him to seek deliverance. And indeed God's mercy doth eminently bear the style of goodness.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verses 21—25.—The thunder and lightning are now as it were followed by a shower of tears of deep sorrowful complaint.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 22.—"*For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.*" Note here, how beautifully he unites these arguments. He had said, "*Because Thy mercy is good;* and he adds, "*Because I am poor and needy.*" He could not have added anything more appropriate: for this is the nature of goodness and mercy, even in the human heart, much more in God, the best and most merciful of all beings, that nothing more easily moves it to give succour, than the affliction, calamity, and misery of those by whom it is invoked.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 22.—"*My heart is wounded within me.*" The hearts of the saints and pious men are not as brass or stone, that the apathy of the Stoics should have lodging in them, but are susceptible to griefs and passions.—*Musculus.*

Verse 23.—"*I am gone like the shadow when it declineth.*"—Bishop Horsley renders, "*I am just gone, like the shadow stretched to its utmost length;*" and remarks:—"The state of the shadows of terrestrial objects at sunset, lengthening every instant, and growing faint as they lengthen; and in the instant that they shoot to an immeasurable length disappearing."

Verse 23.—"*I am tossed up and down as the locust.*" Although the locusts have sufficient strength of flight to remain on the wing for a considerable period, and to pass over great distances, they have little or no command over the direction of their flight, always travel with the wind, in the same way as

the quail. So entirely are they at the mercy of the wind, that if a sudden gust arises the locusts are tossed about in the most helpless manner; and if they should happen to come across one of the circular air-currents that are so frequently found in the countries which they inhabit, they are whirled round and round without the least power of extricating themselves.—*J. G. Wood.*

Verse 23.—"*I am tossed up and down as the locust.*" This reference is to the flying locust. I have had frequent opportunities to notice how these squadrons are tossed up and down, and whirled round and round by the ever-varying currents of the mountain winds.—*W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 28.—"*Let them curse, but bless thou.*" Fear not thou, who art a saint, their imprecations; this is but like false fire in the pan of an uncharged gun, it gives a crack, but hurts not; God's blessings will cover thee from their curse.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 28 (*first clause*).—Men's curses are impotent, God's blessings are omnipotent.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 30.—"*I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth.*" In the celebration of God's praises, there can be no question that these must issue from the heart ere they can be uttered by the lips; at the same time, it would be an indication of great coldness, and of want of fervor, did not the tongue unite with the heart in this exercise. The reason why David makes mention of the tongue only is, that he takes it for granted that, unless there be a pouring out of the heart before God, those praises which reach no farther than the ear are vain and frivolous; and, therefore, from the very bottom of his soul, he pours forth his heart-felt gratitude in fervent strains of praise; and this he does from the same motives which ought to influence all the faithful—the desire of mutual edification; for to act otherwise would be to rob God of the honour which belongs to him.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 31.—"*He shall stand at the right hand of the poor.*" This expression implies, first, that he appears there as a *friend.* How cheering, how comforting it is to have a friend to stand by us when we are in trouble! Such a friend is Jesus. In the hour of necessity he comes as a friend to stand by the right hand of the poor creature whose soul is condemned by guilt and accusation. But he stands in a far higher relation than that of a friend; he stands, too, as *surety and a deliverer.* He goes, as it were, into the court; and when the prisoner stands at the bar, he comes forward and stands at his right hand as his surety and bondsman; he brings out of his bosom the acquittance of the debt, signed and sealed with his own blood, he produces it to the eyes of the court, and claims and demands the acquittal and absolution of the prisoner at whose right hand he stands. He stands there, then, that the prisoner may be freely pardoned, and completely justified from those accusations that "*condemn his soul.*" O sweet standing! O blessed appearance!—*Joseph C. Philpot* (1802—1869).

Verse 31.—"*He shall stand at the right hand of the poor.*" One of the oldest Rabbinical commentaries has a very beautiful gloss on this passage. "Whenever a poor man stands at thy door, the Holy One, blessed be His Name, stands at his right hand. If thou givest him alms, know that thou shalt receive a reward from Him who standeth at his right hand."—*Alfred Edersheim, in "Sketches of the Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ,"* 1876.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The silence of God. What it may mean: what it involves: how we may endeavour to break it.

Verse 1.—"*God of my praise.*" A text which may be expounded in its double meaning.

Verse 2.—Slander. Its cause—wickedness and malice. Its instruments—deceit and lies. Its frequency—Jesus and the saints slandered. Its punishment. Our resort when tried by it—prayer to God.

Verses 1—3.—I. God is for his people when the wicked are against them (verse 1); 1. for his people's sake; 2. for his own sake. II. The wicked are against his people when he is for them (verses 2, 3); 1. from hatred to God; 2. from hatred to his people.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—On the excellency of prayer. See Expository Notes.

Verse 4.—Our Lord's adversaries, and his resort.

Verses 4, 5.—I. David's spirit and conduct towards his enemies. 1. His spirit is love—love for hatred; hence his denunciations are against their sins, rather than against them. 2. His conduct. He returned good for evil; he interceded for them. II. Their spirit and conduct towards him. 1. Hatred for love. 2. Evil for good.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—"*Evil for good.*" This is devil-like. Have not men been guilty of this to parents, to those who have warned them, to saints and ministers, and especially to the Lord himself?

Verse 5.—How has the Redeemer been recompensed? Show what he deserves and what he receives from various individuals. He feels the unkindness of those who are ungrateful.

Verse 6.—It is the law of retribution to punish the wicked by means of the wicked.—*Starke.*

Verse 7.—When may prayer become sin. From what is sought, how sought, by whom sought, and wherefore sought.

Verse 8.—"*Let his days be few.*" Sin the great shortener of human life. After the flood the whole race lived a shorter time; passion and avaricious care shorten life, and some sins have a peculiar power to do this, lust, drunkenness, &c.

Verses 20, 21.—I. David leaves his enemies in the hand of God (verse 20). II. He puts himself into the same hands (verse 21).—*G. R.*

Verse 21.—The plea of a believer must be drawn from his God,—his "name" and "mercy." The opposite habit of searching for arguments in self very common and very disappointing.

Verse 21.—The peculiar goodness of divine mercy.

Verse 22.—The inward sorrows of a saint. Their cause, effects, consolations and cure.

Verses 26, 27.—I. The Prayer. II. The Believing Title: "*O Lord my God.*" III. The attribute relied upon. IV. The motive for the petition.

Verse 28.—The divine cure for human ill-will; and the saint's temper when he trusts therein—"let thy servant rejoice."

Verse 29.—I. A prayer for the repentance of David's adversaries. II. A prophecy for their confusion if they remain impenitent.—*G. R.*

Verse 29.—The sinner's last mantle.

Verse 30.—Vocal praise. Should be personal, resolute, intelligent, abundant, hearty. It should attract others, join with others, stimulate others, but never lose its personality.

Verses 30, 31.—I. David's *will* with respect to himself: "I will . . . yea, I will" etc. (verse 30). II. His *shall* with respect to God: "he shall," etc. (verse 31).—*G.R.*

Verses 30, 31.—He promiseth God that he will praise him, verse 30. He

promiseth himself that he shall have cause to praise God, ver. 31.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 31.—I. The character to whom the promise is made—the poor. II. The danger to which he is exposed—those that condemn his soul. III. The deliverance which is promised to him—divine, opportune, efficient, complete, everlasting.

WORKS ON THE HUNDRED AND NINTH PSALM.

In "The Expositor," vol. II. (1875), edited by the Rev. Samuel Cox, there is "An Apology for the Vindictive Psalm" (Psalm CIX.), by Joseph Hammond, LL.B. In volume III. of the same magazine are four articles from the pen of the same writer, on "The Vindictive Psalms vindicated."

"The Imprecatory Psalms." Six Lectures. By the Rev. R. A. Bertram. 1867. [12mo.]

In Dr. Thomas Randolph's Works, entitled "A View of our Blessed Saviour's Ministry . . . together with a Charge, Dissertations, Sermons, and Theological Lectures," 2 vols., 8vo., Oxford, 1784, there is a comment on Psalm 109, vol. 2, p. 315.

The Sermons of Charles Peters, A.M., 8vo., London, 1776, contain "The Curses of Psalm the 109th explained, with practical instructions," pp. 348—378.

W. Keate's Sermon, entitled, "The 109th, commonly called the Imprecating Psalm, considered, on a principle by which the Psalm explains itself." 4to., London, 1794.

F. H. Dunwell. A Tract on the Commination Service of the Church of England. 12mo. 1853.

In the "Bibliotheca Sacra and Theological Review," vol. I., 1844, pp. 97—110, there is an article on "The Imprecations in the Scriptures," by B. B. Edwards, Professor in the Theological Seminary, Andover.

There is also an article on "The Imprecatory Psalms," in "Bibliotheca Sacra and American Biblical Repository," for July, 1856, pp. 551—563, by John J. Owen, D.D., Professor in the Free Academy, New York.

PSALM CX.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David. *Of the correctness of this title there can be no doubt, since our Lord in Matthew xxii. says, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord." Yet some critics are so fond of finding new authors for the psalms that they dare to fly in the face of the Lord Jesus himself. To escape from finding Jesus here, they read the title, "*Psalm of (or concerning) David," *as though it was not so much written by him as of him; but he that reads with understanding will see little enough of David here except as the writer. He is not the subject of it even in the smallest degree, but Christ is all. How much was revealed to the patriarch David! How blind are some modern wise men, even amid the present blaze of light, as compared with this poet-prophet of the darker dispensation. May the Spirit who spoke by the man after God's own heart give us eyes to see the hidden mysteries of this marvellous psalm, in which every word has an infinity of meaning.*

SUBJECT AND DIVISION.—*The subject is* THE PRIEST-KING. *None of the kings of Israel united these two offices, though some endeavoured to do so. Although David performed some acts which appeared to verge upon the priestly, yet he was no priest, but of the tribe of Judah, "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood"; and he was far too devout a man to thrust himself into that office uncalled. The Priest-King here spoken of is David's Lord, a mysterious personage typified by Melchizedek, and looked for by the Jews as the Messiah. He is none other than the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. The Psalm describes the appointment of the kingly priest, his followers, his battles, and his victory. Its centre is verse* 4, *and so it may be divided, as Alexander suggests, into the introduction, verses* 1—3; *the central thought, verse* 4; *and the supplementary verses,* 5—7.

EXPOSITION.

1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3 Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

1. "*The* LORD *said unto my Lord.*"—Jehovah said unto my Adonai: David in spirit heard the solemn voice of Jehovah speaking to the Messiah from of old. What wonderful intercourse there has been between the Father and the Son! From this secret and intimate communion springs the covenant of grace and all its marvellous arrangements. All the great acts of grace are brought into actual being by the word of God; had he not spoken, there had been no manifestation of Deity to us; but in the beginning was the Word, and from of old there was mysterious fellowship between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ concerning his people and the great contest on their behalf between himself and the powers of evil. How condescending on Jehovah's part to permit a mortal ear to hear, and a human pen to record his secret converse with his co-equal Son! How greatly should we prize the revelation of his private and solemn discourse with the Son, herein made public for the refreshing of his people! Lord, what is man that thou shouldst thus impart thy secrets unto him!

Though David was a firm believer in the Unity of the Godhead, he yet spiritually discerns the two persons, distinguishes between them, and perceives that in the second he has a peculiar interest, for he calls him "*my Lord.*" This

was an anticipation of the exclamation of Thomas, "My Lord and my God," and it expresses the Psalmist's reverence, his obedience, his believing appropriation, and his joy in Christ. It is well to have clear views of the mutual relations of the persons of the blessed Trinity; indeed, the knowledge of these truths is essential for our comfort and growth in grace. There is a manifest distinction in the divine persons, since one speaks to another; yet the Godhead is one.

"*Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*" Away from the shame and suffering of his earthly life, Jehovah calls the Adonai, our Lord, to the repose and honours of his celestial seat. His work is done, and he may sit; it is well done, and he may sit at his right hand; it will have grand results, and he may therefore quietly wait to see the complete victory which is certain to follow. The glorious Jehovah thus addresses the Christ as our Saviour; for, says David, he said "unto my Lord." Jesus is placed in the seat of power, dominion, and dignity, and is to sit there by divine appointment while Jehovah fights for him, and lays every rebel beneath his feet. He sits there by the Father's ordinance and call, and will sit there despite all the raging of his adversaries, till they are all brought to utter shame by his putting his foot upon their necks. In this sitting he is our representative. The mediatorial kingdom will last until the last enemy shall be destroyed, and then, according to the inspired word, "cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father." The work of subduing the nations is now in the hand of the great God, who by his Providence will accomplish it to the glory of his Son; his word is pledged to it, and the session of his Son at his right hand is the guarantee thereof; therefore let us never fear as to the future. While we see our Lord and representative sitting in quiet expectancy, we, too, may sit in the attitude of peaceful assurance, and with confidence await the grand outcome of all events. As surely as Jehovah liveth Jesus must reign, yea, even now he is reigning, though all his enemies are not yet subdued. During the present interval, through which we wait for his glorious appearing and visible millennial kingdom, he is in the place of power, and his dominion is in no jeopardy, or otherwise he would not remain quiescent. He sits because all is safe, and he sits at Jehovah's right hand because omnipotence waits to accomplish his will. Therefore there is no cause for alarm whatever may happen in this lower world; the sight of Jesus enthroned in divine glory is the sure guarantee that all things are moving onward towards ultimate victory. Those rebels who now stand high in power shall soon be in the place of contempt, they shall be his footstool. He shall with ease rule them, he shall sit and put his foot on them; not rising to tread them down as when a man puts forth force to subdue powerful foes, but retaining the attitude of rest, and still ruling them as abject vassals who have no longer spirit to rebel, but have become thoroughly tamed and subdued.

2. "*The* LORD *shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion.*" It is in and through the church that for the present the power of the Messiah is known. Jehovah has given to Jesus all authority in the midst of his people, whom he rules with his royal sceptre, and this power goes forth with divine energy from the church for the ingathering of the elect, and the subduing of all evil. We have need to pray for the sending out of the rod of divine strength. It was by his rod that Moses smote the Egyptians, and wrought wonders for Israel, and even so whenever the Lord Jesus sends forth the rod of his strength, our spiritual enemies are overcome. There may be an allusion here to Aaron's rod which budded and so proved his power; this was laid up in the ark, but our Lord's rod is sent forth to subdue his foes. This promise began to be fulfilled at Pentecost, and it continues even to this day, and shall yet have a grander fulfilment. O God of eternal might, let the strength of our Lord Jesus be more clearly seen, and let the nations see it as coming forth out of the midst of thy feeble people, even from Zion, the place of thine abode. "*Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies;*" as he does whenever his mighty sceptre of grace is stretched forth to renew and save them. Moses' rod brought water

out of the flinty rock, and the gospel of Jesus soon causes repentance to flow in rivers from the once hardened heart of man. Or the text may mean that though the church is situated in the midst of a hostile world, yet it exerts a great influence, it continues to manifest an inward majesty, and is after all the ruling power among the nations because the shout of a king is in her midst. Jesus, however hated by men, is still the King of kings. His rule is over even the most unwilling, so as to overrule their fiercest opposition to the advancement of his cause. Jesus, it appears from this text, is not inactive during his session at Jehovah's right hand, but in his own way proves the abiding nature of his kingdom both *in* Zion and *from* Zion, both among his friends and his foes. We look for the clearer manifestation of his almighty power in the latter days; but even in these waiting times we rejoice that to the Lord all power is given in heaven and in earth.

3. "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.*" In consequence of the sending forth of the rod of strength, namely, the power of the gospel, out of Zion, converts will come forward in great numbers to enlist under the banner of the Priest-King. Given to him of old, they are his people, and when his power is revealed, these hasten with cheerfulness to own his sway, appearing at the gospel call as it were spontaneously, even as the dew comes forth in the morning. This metaphor is further enlarged upon, for as the dew has a sparkling beauty, so these willing armies of converts have a holy excellence and charm about them; and as the dew is the lively emblem of freshness, so are these converts full of vivacity and youthful vigour, and the church is refreshed by them and made to flourish exceedingly. Let but the gospel be preached with divine unction, and the chosen of the Lord respond to it like troops in the day of the mustering of armies; they come arrayed by grace in shining uniforms of holiness, and for number, freshness, beauty, and purity, they are as the dewdrops which come mysteriously from the morning's womb. Some refer this passage to the resurrection, but even if it be so, the work of grace in regeneration is equally well described by it, for it is a spiritual resurrection. Even as the holy dead rise gladly into the lovely image of their Lord, so do quickened souls put on the glorious righteousness of Christ, and stand forth to behold their Lord and serve him. How truly beautiful is holiness! God himself admires it. How wonderful also is the eternal youth of the mystical body of Christ! As the dew is new every morning, so is there a constant succession of converts to give to the church perpetual juvenility. Her young men have a dew from the Lord upon them, and arouse in her armies an undying enthusiasm for him whose "locks are bushy and black as a raven" with unfailing youth. Since Jesus ever lives, so shall his church ever flourish. As his strength never faileth, so shall the vigour of his true people be renewed day by day. As he is a Priest-King, so are his people all priests and kings, and the beauties of holiness are their priestly dress, their garments for glory and for beauty; of these priests unto God there shall be an unbroken succession. The realization of this day of power during the time of the Lord's tarrying is that which we should constantly pray for; and we may legitimately expect it since he ever sits in the seat of honour and power, and puts forth his strength, according to his own word, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

We have now reached the heart of the psalm, which is also the very centre and soul of our faith. Our Lord Jesus is a Priest-King by the ancient oath of Jehovah: "he glorified not himself to be made an high priest," but was ordained thereunto from of old, and was called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek. It must be a solemn and a sure matter which leads the Eternal to swear, and with him an oath fixes and settles the decree for ever; but in this

case, as if to make assurance a thousand times sure, it is added, "*and will not repent.*" It is done, and done for ever and ever; Jesus is sworn in to be the priest of his people, and he must abide so even to the end, because his commission is sealed by the unchanging oath of the immutable Jehovah. If his priesthood could be revoked, and his authority removed, it would be the end of all hope and life for the people whom he loves; but this sure rock is the basis of our security—the oath of God establishes our glorious Lord both in his priesthood and in his throne. It is the Lord who has constituted him a priest for ever, he has done it by oath, that oath is without repentance, is taking effect now, and will stand throughout all ages: hence our security in him is placed beyond all question.

The declaration runs in the present tense as being the only time with the Lord, and comprehending all other times. "*Thou art,*" *i.e.*, thou wast and art and art to come, in all ages a priestly King. The order of Melchizedek's priesthood was the most ancient and primitive, the most free from ritual and ceremony, the most natural and simple, and at the same time the most honourable. That ancient patriarch was the father of his people, and at the same time ruled and taught them; he swayed both the sceptre and the censer, reigned in righteousness, and offered sacrifice before the Lord. There has never arisen another like to him since his days, for whenever the kings of Judah attempted to seize the sacerdotal office they were driven back to their confusion: God would have no king-priest save his son. Melchizedek's office was exceptional: none preceded or succeeded him; he comes upon the page of history mysteriously; no pedigree is given, no date of birth, or mention of death; he blesses Abraham, receives tithe and vanishes from the scene amid honours which show that he was greater than the founder of the chosen nation. He is seen but once, and that once suffices. Aaron and his seed came and went; their imperfect sacrifice continued for many generations, because it had no finality in it, and could never make the comers thereunto perfect. Our Lord Jesus, like Melchizedek, stands forth before us as a priest of divine ordaining; not made a priest by fleshly birth, as the sons of Aaron; he mentions neither father, mother, nor descent, as his right to the sacred office: he stands upon his personal merits, by himself alone; as no man came before him in his work, so none can follow after; his order begins and ends in his own person, and in himself it is eternal, "having neither beginning of days nor end of years." The King-Priest has been here and left his blessing upon the believing seed, and now he sits in glory in his complete character, atoning for us by the merit of his blood, and exercising all power on our behalf.

"O may we ever hear thy voice
In mercy to us speak,
And in our Priest we will rejoice,
Thou great Melchizedek."

5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies: he shall wound the heads over many countries.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

The last verses of this psalm we understand to refer to the future victories of the Priest-King. He shall not forever sit in waiting posture, but shall come into the fight to end the weary war by his own victorious presence. He will lead the final charge in person; his own right hand and his holy arm shall get unto him the victory.

5. "*The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.*" Now that he has come into the field of action, the infinite Jehovah comes with him as the strength of his right hand. Eternal power attends the coming of the Lord, and earthly power dies before it as though smitten through with a sword. In the last days all the kingdoms of the earth shall be overcome by the kingdom of heaven, and those who dare oppose shall meet with swift and overwhelming ruin. What are kings when they dare oppose the Son of God? A single stroke shall suffice for their destruction. When the angel of the Lord smote Herod there was no need of a second blow; he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost. Concerning the last days, we read of the Faithful and True, who shall ride upon a white horse, and in righteousness judge and make war: "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

6. "*He shall judge among the heathen,*" or, among the nations. All nations shall feel his power, and either yield to it joyfully or be crushed before it. "*He shall fill the places with the dead bodies.*" In the terrible battles of his gospel all opponents shall fall till the field of fight is heaped high with the slain. This need not be understood literally, but as a poetical description of the overthrow of all rebellious powers and the defeat of all unholy principles. Yet should kings oppose the Lord with weapons of war, the result would be their overwhelming defeat and the entire destruction of their forces. Read in connection with this prophecy the passage which begins at the seventeenth verse of Rev. xix. and runs on to the end of the chapter. Terrible things in righteousness will be seen ere the history of this world comes to an end. "*He shall wound the heads over many countries.*" He will strike at the greatest powers which resist him, and wound not merely common men, but those who rule and reign. If the nations will not have Christ for their Head, they shall find their political heads to be powerless to protect them. Or the passage may be read, "he has smitten the head over the wide earth." The monarch of the greatest nation shall not be able to escape the sword of the Lord; nor shall that dread spiritual prince who rules over the children of disobedience be able to escape without a deadly wound. Pope and priest must fall, with Mahomet and other deceivers who are now heads of the people. Jesus must reign and they must perish.

7. "*He shall drink of the brook in the way.*" So swiftly shall he march to conquest that he shall not stay for refreshment, but drink as he hastens on. Like Gideon's men that lapped, he shall throw his heart into the fray and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make in the earth. "*Therefore shall he lift up the head.*" His own head shall be lifted high in victory, and his people, in him, shall be upraised also. When he passed this way before, he was burdened and had stern work laid upon him; but in his second advent he will win an easy victory; aforetime he was the man of sorrows, but when he comes a second time his head will be lifted in triumph. Let his saints rejoice with him. "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." In the latter days we look for terrible conflicts and for a final victory. Long has Jesus borne with our rebellious race, but at length he will rise to end the warfare of longsuffering, by the blows of justice. God has fought with men's sins for their good, but he will not always by his Spirit strive with men; he will cease from that struggle of long-suffering love, and begin another which shall soon end in the final destruction of his adversaries. O King-priest, we who are, in a minor degree, king-priests too, are full of gladness because thou reignest even now, and wilt come ere long to vindicate thy cause and establish thine empire for ever. Even so, come quickly. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—The preceding Psalm is a Passion-Psalm, and it is now followed by a Psalm of Christ's Resurrection, Ascension, and Session in glory. We have seen the same connection in Ps. xxii.—xxiv., and in Ps. xlv.—xlvii. The present psalm grows up from the former Psalm, as the Hill of Olivet, the Hill of Ascension, rises up from the Vale of Gethsemane below it.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Whole Psalm.—This psalm has been well designated the crown of all the Psalms, of which Luther saith that it is worthy to be overlaid with precious jewels. More especially does the Reformer call verse 5 a well-spring,—nay, a treasury of all Christian doctrines, understanding, wisdom, and comfort, richer and fuller than any other passage of Holy Writ. In his own peculiar manner, he styles Christ the *Sheblimini* ('Sit on my right hand'). 'Full sure, the devil must let alone my *Sheblimini*, and cannot bring him down either by his scorn or by his wrath.' Christ still liveth and reigneth, and his title is *Sheblimini*. On his stirrup is engraven, "I will make thine enemies thy footstool," and upon his diadem, "Thou art a priest for ever."—*Alfred Edersheim*, 1873.

Whole Psalm.—The ancients (by Cassiodorus' collection) term this psalm *the sun of our faith, the treasure of holy writ: verbis brevis, sensu infinitus*, (saith Augustine,) short in words, but in sense infinite. Theodoret notes how it is connected with the psalm going before: "there (saith he) we have his cross and sufferings, here his conquest and trophies." For he cometh forth as the *heir apparent* of the Almighty, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, graced with, 1. *Title*, "*My Lord.*" 2. *Place*, "*Sit thou on my right hand.*" 3. *Power*, "*Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*"—*John Prideaux, in a Sermon entitled*, "*The Draught of the Brooke*," 1636.

Whole Psalm.—This psalm is one of the fullest and most compendious prophecies of the person and offices of Christ in the whole Old Testament, and so full of fundamental truth, that I shall not shun to call it *Symbolum Davidicum*, the prophet David's creed. And indeed there are very few, if any, of the articles of that creed which we all generally profess, which are not either plainly expressed, or by most evident implication couched in this little model. First, the *Doctrine of the Trinity* is in the first words; "*The Lord said unto my Lord.*" There is *Jehovah the Father*, and *my Lord*, the Son, and the consecrating of him to be David's Lord which was by the *Holy Ghost*, by whose fulness he was anointed unto the offices of king and priest; for so our Saviour himself expounds this word "*said*," by the sealing and sanctification of him to his office, John x. 34, 35, 36. Then we have the *Incarnation of Christ*, in the words, "*my Lord*," together with his dignity and honour above David (as our Saviour himself expounds it, Matt. xxii. 42, 45). *Mine*, that is, my Son by descent and genealogy after the flesh, and yet my Lord too, in regard of his higher son-ship. We have also the *Sufferings of Christ*, in that he was consecrated a *priest* (ver. 4) to offer up himself once for all, and so *to drink of the brook in the way*. We have his *Completed Work* and conquest over all his enemies and sufferings; *his Resurrection*, "*he shall lift up his head*"; his *Ascension* and *Intercession*, "*Sit thou on my right hand.*" We have here also a *Holy Catholic Church* gathered together by the sceptre of his kingdom, and holding in the parts thereof a blessed and beautiful *Communion of Saints*; "*The* LORD *shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.*" We have the *Last Judgment*, for *all his enemies must be put under his feet*, (which is the Apostle's argument to prove the end of all things, 1 Cor. xv. 25); and there is the *day of his wrath*, wherein he shall accomplish that judgment over the heathen, and that victory over the kings of the earth (*who take counsel and band themselves together against him*), which he doth here in his word begin. We

have the *Remission of sins*, comprised in his priesthood, for he was to offer sacrifices for the remission of sins, and "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Eph. i. 7; Heb. ix. 26. We have the *Resurrection of the body*, because he must "subdue all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death," as the Apostle argues out of this psalm, 1 Cor. xv 25, 26. And lastly, we have *life everlasting*, in the everlasting merit and virtue of his priesthood, "*Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*," and in his sitting at the right hand of God, whither he is gone as our forerunner, and to prepare a place for us, Heb. vi. 20; John xiv. 2; and therefore the apostle from his sitting there, and living ever, inferreth the perfection and certainty of our salvation, Rom. vi. 8, 11; viii. 17; Eph. ii. 16; Col. iii. 1–4; 1 Cor. xv. 49; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. iv. 14; Heb. vii. 25; 1 John iii. 2.—*Edward Reynolds*, 1599–1676.

Whole Psalm.—Although the Jews of later times have gone about to wrest it to another meaning, yet this Psalm is so approved and undoubted a prophecy of Christ, that the Pharisees durst not deny it, when being questioned by our Saviour (Matt. xxii. 42, 43) how it should be, seeing Christ is the son of David, that David notwithstanding should call him Lord, saying, "*The Lord said unto my Lord*," they could not answer him a word, whereas the answer had been very easy and ready if they could have denied this psalm to be meant of Christ. But they knew it could not be otherwise understood, and it was commonly taken amongst them to be a prophecy of their Messias, according to the very evidence of the text itself, which cannot be fitted to any other, but only to Christ our Saviour, the Son of God. For whereas some of them since then have construed all these things as spoken in the name of the people of Judah concerning David their king, the text itself refuseth that construction, when in those words, "*Sit thou at my right hand*," it mentioneth an honour done to him of whom it speaketh, greater than can be fitted to the angels, and therefore much less to be applied unto David. Again, that which is spoken in the fourth verse of the priesthood, cannot be understood of David, who was indeed a king, but never had anything spoken as touching the priesthood to appertain unto him, and of whom it cannot be conceived how it should be said, "*Thou art a priest for ever*," etc. Yea, there is nothing here spoken whereof we may see in David any more but some little shadow in comparison of that which hath come to pass in Jesus Christ.—*Robert Abbot* (1560—1617) *in* "*The Exaltation of the Kingdom and Priesthood of Christ.*"

Whole Psalm.—The sixty-eighth psalm hails the ascent of the Messiah, prefigured by the translation of the ark, and gives a rapid and obscure view of the glories and the blessings consequent upon that event. The twenty-fourth exhibits to us the Messiah ascending to his redemption throne upborne by the wings of angels and archangels, and hosannahed by the whole intelligent creation; it marks in the most glowing colours the triumphant entry of Messiah into the heavenly regions, and the tone of authority and power with which he commands that entrance—it sends him attended by the angelic host to his Father's throne, there to claim that pre-eminence which was his by inheritance and by conquest. At this point the Psalm before us "takes up the wondrous tale"; it exhibits to us the awful solemnities of his reception, it represents the Father bestowing on his well-beloved Son the kingdom which he had earned, exalting him to the throne, and putting all things under his feet; receiving him in his office of prophet, and promising universality and permanence to "the rod of his strength"; receiving him in the office of priesthood, his own peculiar priesthood, and confirming its efficacy and duration by an oath; thus perfecting the redemption scheme, and completing the conquest over sin and death, and him who had the power of death. Man united with God was raised to the throne of being: man united with God perfected the sacrifice which was demanded, and the angelic host is represented by the Psalmist as taking up the strain, and hymning the future triumphs of the King of Glory—triumphs over his foes, whom he will visit in the day of his wrath, and triumphs with his

willing people, whom he will assist with his Spirit, refine by his grace, and exalt into his glory. Such do I conceive to be the occasion, the object, and the tendency of this sacred song: to me it appears to be eminently an *epinician*, or song of victory: it celebrates the triumph of the conqueror, it presents him with the rewards of victory, and it predicts future conquests as crowning his glory; while elsewhere we see the Captain of our salvation militant, here we see him triumphant; while elsewhere we see his offices inchoate, here they are perfected by the approval of the Godhead, and the promise of eternity: here we have instruction consolidating empire, and the atonement completed by the everlasting priesthood.—*J. H. Singer, in "The Irish Pulpit,"* 1839.

Verse 1.—In this one verse we have a description of Christ's person, his wars and his victory; so that we may say of it, (and so indeed of the whole psalm, which is an epitome of the Gospel), as Tully did of Brutus in his laconical epistle, *Quam multa, quam paucis!* How much in a little.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*The* LORD *said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand.*" An oft-quoted passage—because it contains a memorable truth. We find it quoted by Messiah himself to lead Israel to own him as greater than David, Matt. xxii. 44. It is quoted in Heb. i. 13, to prove him higher far than angels. It is brought forward by Peter, Acts ii. 34, to show him Lord as well as Christ. It is referred to in Heb. x. 12, 13, as declaring that Jesus has satisfactorily finished what he undertook to accomplish on earth, "the one sacrifice for ever," and is henceforth on that seat of divine honour "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" in the day of his Second Coming.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"*The* LORD *said.*" Albeit the understanding of Christ's person and office be necessary unto the church, yet none know the Son save the Father, and they to whom he will reveal him: for David knew Christ only by the Father's teaching: "*The Lord said,*" said he.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"*My Lord.*" From hence we learn that though Christ was man, yet he was more than a bare man, since he is Lord to his father David. For *jure naturæ* no son is lord to his father; domination doth never ascend. There must be something above nature in him to make him his father's sovereign, as our Saviour himself argueth from these words, Matt. xxii. 42, 45.—*Edward Reynolds.*

Verse 1.—"*My Lord.*" It was a higher honour to have Christ for his son, than to be a king; yet David does not say that Christ is his son, but rejoices that Christ is his Lord, and he Christ's servant. But this joy has also been procured *for it:* see Luke i. 43; John xx. 28; Phil. iii. 3, 8. They who regard the Messiah only as the son of David, regard the lesser part of the conception of him. A dominion to which David himself is subject, shows the heavenly majesty of the King, and the heavenly character of his kingdom.—*John Albert Bengel.*

Verse 1.—"*Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*" Every word is full of weight. For though ordinarily subdivisions of holy Scripture and crumbling of the bread of life be rather a loosing than an expounding of it; yet in such parts of it as were of purpose intended for models and summaries of fundamental doctrines, (of which sort this psalm is one of the fullest and briefest in the whole Scriptures), as in little maps of large countries, there is no word whereupon some point of weighty consequence may not depend. Here then is to be considered the *term of duration* or *measure of Christ's kingdom:* "*until.*" The *author* of subduing Christ's enemies under him: "*I, the Lord.*" The *manner* thereof; *ponam* and *ponam scabellum*, put thy foes as a stool under thy feet. Victory is a relative word, and presupposeth enemies, and they are expressed in the text. . . . Enmity shows itself against Christ in all the offices of his mediation. There is enmity against him as a *prophet*. Enmity against his *truth*,—in opinion by adulterating it with human mixtures and superinducements, teaching for doctrines the traditions of men; in affection, by wishing many divine truths were razed out of the Scriptures, as being manifestly

contrary to those pleasures which they love rather than God; in conversation, by keeping down the truth in unrighteousness, and in those things which they know, as brute beasts, corrupting themselves. Enmity against his *teaching*, by quenching the motions, and resisting the evidence of his Spirit in the Word, refusing to hear his voice, and rejecting the counsel of God against themselves. There is enmity against him as a *priest*, by undervaluing his person, sufferings, righteousness, or merits. And as a *king;* enmity to his worship, by profaneness neglecting it, by idolatry misappropriating it, by superstition corrupting it. Enmity to his ways and service, by ungrounded prejudices, misjudging them as grievous, unprofitable, or unequal ways; and by wilful disobedience forsaking them to walk in the ways of our own heart.—*Edward Reynolds.*

Verse 1.—"*Make thine enemies thy footstool.*" This expression, that the conquest of Christ's enemies shall be but as the removing of a stool into its place, noteth unto us two things: first, *the easiness of God's victory* over the enemies of Christ. They are before him as nothing, less than nothing, the drop of a bucket, the dust of the balance, a very little thing. . . . Secondly, as this putting of Christ's enemies like a stool under the feet noteth easiness, so also it noteth *order* or *beauty* too. When Christ's enemies shall be under his foot, then there shall be a right order in things; then it shall indeed appear that God is a *God of order*, and therefore the day wherein that shall be done, is called "*the times of the restitution of all things.*" Acts iii. 21. The putting of Christ's enemies under his feet is an *act of justice;* and of all others, justice is the most orderly virtue, that which keepeth beauty upon the face of a people, as consisting itself in symmetry and proportion.

This putting of Christ's enemies as a stool under his feet, also denotes unto us two things in reference to Christ: first, his *rest*, and secondly, his *triumph*. *To stand*, in the Scripture phrase, denoteth *ministry*, and *to sit, rest;* and there is no posture so easy as to sit with a stool under one's feet. Till Christ's enemies then be all under his feet, he is not fully in his rest.

Furthermore, this "*footstool*" under Christ's feet, in reference to his enemies, denoteth unto us four things. First, *the extreme shame and confusion* which they shall everlastingly suffer, the utter abasing and bringing down of all that exalteth itself against Christ. Secondly, hereby is noted *the burden which wicked men must bear:* the footstool beareth the weight of the body, so must the enemies of Christ bear the weight of his heavy and everlasting wrath upon their souls. Thirdly, herein is noted *the relation which the just recompense* of God bears unto the sins of ungodly men. Thus will Christ deal with his enemies at the last day. Here they trample upon Christ in his word, in his ways, in his members: they make the saints bow down for them to go over, and make them as the pavements on the ground; they tread under foot the blood of the covenant, and the sanctuary of the Lord, and put Christ to shame; but there their own measure shall be returned into their bosoms, they shall be constrained to confess as Adonibezek, "As I have done, so God hath requited me." Lastly, herein we may note *the great power and wisdom of Christ* in turning the malice and mischief of his enemies unto his own use and advantage; and so ordering wicked men that though they intend nothing but extirpation and ruin to his kingdom, yet they shall be useful unto him, and, against their own wills, serviceable to those glorious ends, in the accomplishing whereof he shall be admired by all those that believe. As in a great house there is necessary use of vessels of dishonour, destined unto sordid and mean, but yet daily, services: so in the great house of God, wicked men are his utensils and household instruments, as footstools and staves, and vessels wherein there is no pleasure, though of them there may be good use.—*Condensed from Reynolds.*

Verse 1.—"*Thy footstool.*" As this our king has a glorious throne, so has he also a wonderful footstool; and as his royal throne imparts to us comfort in the highest degree, so his footstool also imparts to us joy. How joyful shall his poor subjects be when they hear that their prince and king has slain their enemies and delivered them out of their hands! How did their poor subjects

go forward to meet Saul and Jonathan when those kings had slain the Philistines! . . . Moreover, because our King has *his* enemies under his feet, thus shall he also bring all *our* enemies under our feet, for his victory is ours. God be thanked, who has given us the victory through Christ our Lord.—*Joshua Arnd*, 1626—1685.

Verse 2.—"*The rod of thy strength*," or rather, "*The sceptre of thy might*," *i.e.*, of "Thy kingly majesty," as in Jer. xlviii. 17; Ezek. xix. 14. Chrysostom plays upon the word ῥάβδος (LXX) as a rod of strength and consolation, as in Ps. xxiii. 4; a rod of chastisement, as in Ps. ii. 9, 1 Cor. iv. 21; a symbol of kingly rule, as in Is. xi. 1, Ps. xlv. 6. It was by this rod, he says, that the disciples wrought when they subdued the world, in obedience to the command, "Go and make disciples of all nations"; a rod far more powerful than that of Moses, "for that divided rivers, this brake in pieces the ungodliness of the world." And then with profound truth he adds, "Nor would one err who should call the Cross the rod of power; for this rod converted sea and land, and filled them with a vast power. Armed with this rod, the Apostles went forth throughout the world, and accomplished all that they did, beginning at Jerusalem." The Cross, which to men seemed the very emblem of shame and weakness, was, in truth, the power of God.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 2.—"*The rod of thy strength.*" The power of this sceptre and word of Christ appeareth greatly in the saving of his elect. . . . So mightily hath it prevailed and overruled the minds of men against nature, and reason, and learning, and wisdom, and custom, and whatsoever else is strong to hold men in the liking of those things which they have once received and followed, as that they have been content to renounce the devotions which their forefathers had so long embraced; to cast away the gods which themselves had devoutly served; to stop their ears against the contrary motives and persuasions of father and mother; to harden their hearts against the kneelings and weepings and embracings of wife and children; to forego their honors, and inheritances, yea, and their lives also, rather than lose that peace and joy of heart which the same word of Christ had ministered unto them. Yea, how strange is it, and how greatly doth it commend the power of this word, to see weakness hereby prevailing against strength, simplicity against policy; to see the lamb standing without fear before the lion, the gentle turtle before the devouring kite; women and children and weaklings before the great monarchs and potentates of the world, not fearing their threatening words, nor dreading their tormenting hands, but boldly uttering the word of their testimony (Rev. xii. 11), in despite of all their fury, and never yielding to shrink from it, by anything that could be devised against them. The word of God in their hearts gave them courage and resolution and strength to go through fire and water, to bear all adventures of wind and weather, and howsoever they seemed to be beaten against the rocks, yet they escaped shipwreck, and arrived safe at the haven of their desire.—*Robert Abbot.*

Verse 2.—"*Out of Zion.*" We need not say much about how the omniscience of God is displayed in the wonderful fact, that in the very land of the covenant—in the very midst of that people who rejected and crucified the Saviour, the first church of Christ on earth was established. What would cavillers and blasphemers have said, had it been otherwise? had the Christian community been formed in any of the heathen countries? Would it not have been considered as a fiction of the idolatrous priests? Israel scattered among the nations, and the Church of Christ having begun in Zion at Jerusalem, are the most wonderful and enduring monuments, and incontestable witnesses of the truth of Christianity.—*Benjamin Weiss.*

Verse 2.—From his ruling *in the midst of enemies* we learn that the kingdom of Christ in this life is the kingdom of the Cross, of persecutions, and of dangers. Enemies are never wanting, not only external adversaries, but also spiritual and eternal; and therefore great sorrow is always awaiting the godly. In this

most terrible conflict, however, their minds are lifted up by this consolation, *viz.*, that the rod of the kingdom is strong, and cannot be overcome by any force or power; yea, more, albeit assailed with contendings and all kinds of storms, it will continue stable, firm, and perpetual: and there will always be a Church among men, which will fear and worship this King; because the experience of all the ages teaches, that this kingdom has the more grown and increased the more it has been opposed, according to that saying of Basil, ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσι μᾶλλον θάλλει ἡ ἐκκλησία, the Church flourishes more by tribulation.—*Rivetus.*

Verse 2.—"*Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*" Set up thy power over them and reign in them. This is a commission to set up a kingdom *in the very midst* of those who were his enemies; in the hearts of those who had been and were rebellious. His kingdom is set up not by destroying them, but by *subduing* them, so that they become his willing servants. They yield to him, and he rules over them. It is not here a commission to cut them off, but one much more difficult of execution,—to make them his friends, and to dispose them to submit to his authority. Mere *power* may crush men; It requires more than that to make rebels willingly submissive, and to dispose them voluntarily to obey.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy people.*" That is, those whom thou dost receive from thy Father, and, by setting up the standard and ensign of the Gospel, gather to thyself. "*Shall be willing.*" The word is *willingnesses*, that is, a people of *great willingness and devotion*, or (as the original word is elsewhere used, Psalm cxix. 108), shall be *freewill offerings* unto thee. The abstract being put for the concrete, and the plural for the singular, notes how exceeding forward and free they should be; as the Lord, to signify that his people were most rebellious, saith, that they were *rebellion itself*, Ezek. ii. 8. So then the meaning is, thy people shall, with most ready and forward cheerfulness, devote, consecrate, and render up themselves to thy government as a reasonable sacrifice, shall be of a most liberal, free, noble, and unconstrained spirit in thy service, and shall be *voluntaries* in the wars of thy kingdom.—*Edward Reynolds.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy people*," O Jesus Christ, which were given thee by the Father, purchased and redeemed by thee, who acknowledged thee for their Lord, and are bound to thee by a military oath, are *extremely willing*, being devoted to thy service with the greatest readiness of soul, alacrity, inclination, and voluntary obedience. Nor are they willing only, but *willingness* itself in the abstract; nay, *willingnesses* in the plural number, the highest and most excellent willingnesses, all which add an emphasis. This is seen to be so בְּיוֹם חֵילֶךָ "*in the day of thy [valour] power*," in which thy generous spirit laying hold of them, animates them to grand and bold enterprises. Then they go forth in the beauties of holiness, by which they are a terror to the devil, a delight to God and angels, and a mutual edification to one another.—*Herman Witsius*, 1636—1708.

Verse 3.—"*Thy people shall be willing.*" Willing to do what? They shall be willing while others are unwilling. The simple term "*willing*," is very expressive. It denotes the beautiful condition of creatures who suffer themselves to be wrought upon, and moved, according to the will of God. They suffer God to work in them to will and to do. They are *willing* to die unto all sin, they are willing to crucify the old man, or self, in order that the new man, or Christ, may be formed in them. They are *willing* to be weaned from their own thoughts and purposes, that the thoughts and purposes of God may be fulfilled in them. They are *willing* to be transferred from nature's steps of human descent to God's steps of human ascent. Or, to abide by the simplicity of our text, God is Will, and they are "*willing*." God will beautify them with salvation, because there is nothing in them to hinder his working. They will be wise, they will be good, they will be lovely, they will be *like God*, for they are "*willing*"; and there proceeds from God a mighty spirit, the whole tendency of which is to make his creatures like himself.—*John Pulsford, in* "*Quiet Hours*," 1857.

Verse 3.—"*Thy people shall be willing.*" They are willing in believing, loving, obeying, adhering, living piously and justly in this world; so that they do not need the constraints of laws or threats, because they are led by the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there, also, is liberty.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy people shall be willing.*" Am I one of the "willing people"—not only my obedience and allegiance secured from a conviction of the truth, but my heart inclined, and my will renewed? To *do* the will of God, to *bear* the will of God, to *coincide* with the will of God—and that with calm if not cheerful consent of the heart, as seeing him who is invisible, and holding fast my living apprehensions of his person and character? All unwillingness, whether practical or lurking in the heart, springs from unbelief—from a failure to realise him or his purposes. Were Jesus, as God become incarnate, and as giving himself for me, and his counsel of grace towards me, ever or even in any measure before my heart, how could I hesitate to yield myself, absolutely and implicitly, to him and his guidance? Again, this "willingness" is the essence of holiness; it constitutes "the beauties of holiness"—the beauty of Christ cast over the soul. The cure, therefore, for all my misery and sin is more faith, more of Christ, and nearer to him. This let me seek and ask with ever increasing earnestness.—*Alfred Edersheim.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,*" etc. The prophet here notes three things respecting the subjects of the kingdom of the Messiah: 1. Their prompt obedience. 2. Their attire or vesture. 3. Their abundance, or multitude. This representation admirably agrees with what precedes. He had said that the Messiah should reign in the midst of his enemies, but lest any one should think that he would reign only over enemies, unwilling and opposing, as the devils are made subject to Christ, now he lets us know that he will have a loyal people, and obedient subjects, for else there would be wanting that same glory of which Solomon speaks in Prov. xiv. 28, "In the multitude of people is the king's honour." He affirms also, that he would have his own people, who would recognise, receive, and serve him as King, with true obedience, nor would it be a small company, but like the dew, which waters the face of the whole earth.—*Rivetus.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*" It is power acted and executed *with all sweetness, mildness, and gentleness.* Here is "leading, but no force; conduct, but no compulsion," *vehemens, inclinatio, non coactio:** the will is determined, but not the least violence is done to it, to the infringing of its liberty. How spontaneously does the person led follow him that leads him! So it is here. This and all other workings of the Spirit are admirably suited to the nature of reasonable and free agents. Efficacious grace does not at all destroy natural liberty. Where the spirit does not find sinners willing, by his sweet method he makes them willing: "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*" A "*day of power,*" yet "*willing.*" Even the Spirit's drawing is managed with all consistency to the freedom of the will. Ἕλκει ὁ Θεός, ἀλλὰ βουλόμενον ἑλκύει.† "He draws; but it is one that he makes willing to follow." "Behold, I will allure her" (Hosea ii. 14): ay, there is the Spirit's leading! this being the constant and avowed doctrine of the Protestants, and particularly their explication of the Spirit's leading in the text [Rom. viii. 14]; how injurious and invidious are the Popish writers in their traducing and calumniating of them, as if they asserted the Spirit, in this or any other act, to work with compulsion, or in a way destructive to man's essential liberty! It is a vile scandal!—*Thomas Jacomb, in "The Morning Exercises."*

Verse 3.—"*In the day of thy power.*" In the day of thy *strength*, saith the *Vulgate:* of thy force and *valour*, say Tremellius and Junius: of the *assemblies*, say they of Geneva: of the *armies*, saith Munster; "at such times as thou shalt bring thy bands and join battle," so Vatablus, Castalio, and the Chaldee

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* Gorranus. † Chrysostom.

Paraphrase have it. All which the original בְּיוֹם חֵילֶךָ may bear without straining.—*John Prideaux*, 1578—1650.

Verse 3.—The subjects of the Priest-King are willing soldiers. In accordance with the warlike tone of the whole Psalm, our text describes the subjects as an army. That military metaphor comes out more closely when we attach the true meaning of the words, "*in the day of thy power.*" The word rendered, and rightly rendered, "*power*," has the same ambiguity which that word has in the English of the date of our translation, and for a century later, as you may find in Shakspeare and Milton, who both used it in the sense of "army." Singularly enough we do not employ "powers" in that meaning, but we do another word which means the same thing—and talk of "forces," meaning thereby "troops." . . . "*The day of thy power*" is not a mere synonym for "*the time of thy might*," but means specifically "*the day of thine army*," that is, "the day when thou dost muster thy forces and set them in array for the war." The King is going forth to conquest. But he goes not alone. Behind him come his faithful followers, all pressing on with willing hearts and high courage.—*Alexander McLaren*, 1871.

Verse 3.—"*In the day of thy power.*" This refers in a general way to the gospel dispensation, and in particular to the period of conversion. To the perishing sinner the gospel comes, "not in word only, but also in *power*, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." It is an *arresting* power; it meets the sinner, and stays his mad career, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus. It is a *convincing* power, it teaches the sinner that he is ruined in every respect, and leads him to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?". . . . . It is a *life-giving* power; it quickens dead souls, and will eventually bring the dead bodies from their graves; "all that are in the graves *shall hear* the voice of the Son of God and *shall live.*" This is the style of Jehovah, "*I will, they shall;*" none other dare speak thus. It is also *liberating* power; "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—*Theophilus Jones, in a Sermon preached at Surrey Chapel*, 1823.

Verse 3.—"*Thy people*," etc. In *homage*, they shall be like a company of priests in sacred vestments, for they shall appear "*in the beauties of holiness.*" In *number*, they shall be like the countless dewdrops "*from the womb of the morning*," sparkling in the rays of the rising sun, and reflecting his radiance. In *glory* they shall bear the likeness of Christ's resurrection in all its vernal freshness: "*Thou hast the dew of thy youth.*"—*Benjamin Wildon Carr.*

Verse 3.—"*In the beauties of holiness.*" In holy vestments as priests. They are at once warriors and priests; meet for the service of Him who was King and Priest. Neander (*Mem. of Chr. Life*, ch. iv.) remarks on the connection between these two sides of the Christian character. God's soldiers can only *maintain their war* by priestly self-consecration. Conversely: God's priests can only *preserve their purity* by unintermitted conflict.—*William Kay.*

Verse 3.—"*In the beauties of holiness.*" This expression is usually read as if it belonged either to the words immediately preceding, or to those immediately following. But in either case the connection is somewhat difficult and obscure. It seems better regarded as a distinct and separate clause, adding a fresh trait to the description of the army. And what that is we need not find any difficulty in ascertaining. "*The beauties of holiness*" is a frequent phrase for the sacerdotal garments, the holy festal attire of the priests of the Lord. So considered, how beautifully it comes in here. The conquering King whom the psalm hymns is a Priest for ever; and he is followed by an army of priests. The soldiers are gathered in the day of the muster, with high courage and willing devotion, ready to fling away their lives; but they are clad not in mail, but in priestly robes; like those who wait before the altar rather than like those who plunge into the fight, like those who compassed Jericho with the ark for their standard and the trumpets for all their weapons. We can scarcely fail to remember the words which echo these and interpret them. "The armies which were in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white

and clean"—a strange armour against sword-cut and spear-thrust.—*Alexander McLaren.*

Verse 3.—"*The beauties of holiness.*" Godliness is our spiritual beauty. Godliness is to the soul as the light to the world, to illustrate and adorn it. It is not greatness that sets us off in God's eye, but goodness: what is the beauty of the angels but their sanctity? Godliness is the curious embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Ghost: a soul furnished with godliness is damasked with beauty, and enamelled with purity: this is the "clothing of wrought gold" which makes the King of heaven fall in love with us. Were there not an excellency in holiness, the hypocrite would never go about to paint it. Godliness sheds a glory and lustre upon the saints: what are the graces but the golden feathers in which Christ's dove shines? Ps. lxviii. 13. —*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou hast the dew of thy youth.*" These words are often misunderstood, and taken to be a description of the fresh, youthful energy attributed by the Psalm to the Priest-King of this nation of soldier-priests. The misunderstanding, I suppose, has led to the common phrase, "the dew of one's youth." But the reference of the expression is to the army, not to its leader. "*Youth*" here is a collective noun, equivalent to "*young men.*" The host of his soldier-subjects is described as a band of young warriors, whom he leads, in their fresh strength and countless numbers and gleaming beauty like the dew of the morning. . . . It is as a symbol of the refreshing which a weary world will receive from the conquests and presence of the King and his host, that they are likened to the glittering morning dew. Another prophetic Scripture gives us the same emblem when it speaks of Israel being "in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord." Such ought to be the effect of our presence. We are meant to gladden, to adorn, to refresh this parched, prosaic world, with a freshness brought from the chambers of the sunrise.

The dew, formed, in the silence of the darkness while men sleep, falling as willingly on a bit of dead wood as anywhere, hanging its pearls on every poor spike of grass, and dressing everything on which it lies with strange beauty, each separate globule tiny and evanescent, but each flashing back the light, and each a perfect sphere: feeble one by one, but united mighty to make the pastures of the wilderness rejoice—so, created in silence by an unseen influence, feeble when taken in detail, but strong in their myriads, glad to occupy the lowliest place, and each "bright with something of celestial light." Christian men and women are to be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord.—*Alexander McLaren.*

Verse 3.—"*The dew of thy youth.*" There does not, indeed, appear to me any reason to doubt that, in this place, David extols the divine favour displayed in increasing the number of Christ's people; and hence, in consequence of their extraordinary increase, he compares the youth or race which would be born to him to the *dew*. As men are struck with astonishment at seeing the earth moistened and refreshed with dew, though its descent be imperceptible, even so, David declares that an innumerable offspring shall be born to Christ, who shall be spread over the whole earth. The youth, therefore, which, like the dew-drops, are innumerable, are here designated *the dew of childhood*, or *of youth.*—*John Calvin.*

Verse 3.—"*From the womb of the morning*" is, with the utmost pertinency, applied to the conception and production of dews; agreeably to a delicate line in that great master of just description and lively painting, Mr. Thomson:

"The meek ey'd morn appears, mother of dews."

We meet with a fine expression in the book of Job, which may serve to confirm this remark; and may illustrate the propriety of the phrase used in this connection: "Hath the rain a father, or who hath begotten the drops of dew?" It seems, the oriental writers delighted to represent the dew as a kind of birth, as the offspring of the morning. And if so, surely there could be no image in

the whole compass of the universe better adapted to the psalmist's purpose, or more strongly significant of those multitudes of proselytes, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; by the powerful energy of his word and Spirit. Upon this supposition, the whole verse describes the willing subjection, the gracious accomplishments, and the vast number of Christ's converts.—*James Hervey* (1713-14—1758), in "*Meditations and Contemplations.*"

Verse 3.—"*The dew of thy youth.*" The most apparent reference is to multitude. Compare Ps. lxxii. 16, and the proverbial use of the dew together with the sand of the sea shore to express a vast number. The people of the Messiah are a great number that no man can number: Rev. vii. 9. But this is only the common enwrapping veil of a further sense. We must further note, *First*, THE ORIGIN OF THE DEW. *From what comes it?* From earthly matter, vapour and mist, as the new born soldier of Christ comes from the confused, dark substance of the old nature. *By what is it produced?* Through the influence of the heavenly warmth of the beams of the morning sun: so the people of God owe themselves to the light from above. In the vivifying light of heaven, the dewdrops are begotten, and from it they come more properly than from the earth-water. *How are they produced?* Invisibly, wonderfully, by the secret, incomprehensible influence of the divine power. We have by no means exhausted the figure, for we notice, *Secondly*, THE DESIGN OF THE DEW. It is for the *fertilizing and refreshing* of the earth. The spiritual Israel are a fructifying, quickening dew among men. It is also for the *ornament* of the earth, which the dew bestrews as with precious stones; and this beauty is caused because each little drop of dew reflects the morning sun and is an earthly reflection of the heavenly light.—*Condensed from Rudolph Stier.*

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—With singular beauty and propriety does the psalmist compare the first preachers of the gospel to dew. In the first place, they may be compared to the drops of dew on account of their multitude. But, in order to judge of the correctness of the comparison in this respect, we must consider, that, in the Holy Land, the dews are remarkably abundant. A French traveller,* has observed of Judea, that in the morning the ground is as much moistened by dew, as if it had rained. We are informed in the sacred history, that, when the Dayspring from on high visited the earth, many were the followers of Christ; and that very soon after his ascension into heaven, "multitudes both of men and women were added to the Lord." Justly then may those who hastened to the blessed Jesus, when the glorious light of his gospel first dawned upon the world, or immediately on the commencement of his mediatorial kingdom, be compared in number to the drops of dew, which at the dawn of day fall to the earth.

It is mentioned also in this verse, that the first subjects of the Messiah were to present themselves adorned "with the beauties of holiness"; בהדרי קדש in the splendors of holiness. In brightness, then, as well as in multitude, did they resemble the glittering drops of the morning dew. Our great poet has combined these two ideas in his beautiful comparison of an host innumerable to the

> "Stars of morning, dew-drops which the sun impearls."†

The formation of the dew is represented in Scripture as the work of God, and not of man; and its descending to refresh and fertilize the earth is mentioned as his peculiar gift, and in opposition to human means of rendering the earth more fruitful. "Who," saith Job, "hath begotten the drops of dew?" (ch. xxxviii. 28). And the prophet Micah declares, that "the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men"

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* Eugene Rogers.

† Milton's "Paradise Lost," Book v., line 745.

(ch. v. 7). Well, then, might the term be applied by the Psalmist to those whom "God of his own will begat with the word of truth"; and who were his appointed instruments, by their preaching, to cause "the desert to rejoice and to blossom abundantly"; and "the wilderness to become a fruitful field."

Let it also be remembered, that those whom the Psalmist compares to dew are described under the image of young soldiers, going forth to fight the battles of a victorious prince. Now this comparison is used in 2 Sam. xvii. 11, 12: "I counsel," said Hushai to Ahitophel, "that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth upon the ground." It is perhaps not undeserving of notice, that amongst the Romans those troops who first attacked the enemy, and who were composed of young men, were, from a supposed resemblance to dew, called Rorarii. It is not incumbent upon me to investigate the reason of their receiving that name; it is sufficient to point out its similarity with the expression of the psalmist, which is applied to those who were first to engage in the conflict with the enemies of the Gospel of Christ.—*Richard Dixon*, 1811.

Verse 3.—

Thee, in thy power's triumphant day,
The willing nations shall obey;
And, when thy rising beams they view,
Shall all (redeem'd from error's night)
Appear as numberless and bright
As crystal drops of morning dew.

N. Brady and N. Tate.

Verse 3.—

Lord, let thy day of power be known,
Thy people be confessed;
Eager and valiant—priests each one,
In holy garments dressed.

Countless they shine, as dews from heaven
When eastern skies grow bright—
More glorious than those dews are given,
Sparkling in morning light.

George Rawson, in "Hymns, Verses, and Chants," 1876.

Verse 4.—"*The* LORD *hath sworn, and will not repent,*" etc. It should be diligently considered, that God has consecrated Christ priest by an oath, and that this was done for our sakes; First, That we might know how exceedingly momentous was this transaction, and the more reverently and with the stronger faith believe it. Secondly, That we might acknowledge the goodness of God, who, being most truthful in himself, and concerning whose faithfulness it is the greatest crime to doubt, nevertheless has been pleased to speak to us not only with a bare word, but also, after the manner of men, to confirm his decree by an oath.—*Rivetus.*

Verse 4.—"*Sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever.*" God might have made the levitical priest by oath, and yet he might have been changed; but if he had made him by oath to be a priest for ever, then he could not have repented, that is, changed; but he must of necessity have been a priest for ever. Therefore you must take special notice, that God did not only swear that Christ should be a priest, or that he should be a priest for a long time, but a priest "*for ever;*" so that there should never be any priest joined with him, or come after him. So that if we consider the oath, and the thing confirmed by this oath, two things will be manifest: 1. That Christ's priesthood is personal, and settled in one single person for ever; so that he can have no fellow nor copartner, nor any successor in his priesthood. 2. That, by this oath, God did limit his own supreme and absolute power in this particular; and took away the use and exercise of it, and that for ever. For now he hath no power to

make Christ no priest, or take away his priesthood at will and pleasure: and in this God discovered his unspeakable love unto Christ, in that he did so much honour him, and so highly reward him. By this he also displayed his abundant mercy to man; for by this oath known unto man, he signifies that man shall never be destitute of a powerful and effectual priest, able for ever to save; and this doth minister unto sinful man most sweet and heavenly comfort.—*George Lawson*, 1662.

Verse 4.—The form and manner of our Saviour's investiture or consecration was most honourable and glorious, God the Father performing the rites; which were not imposition of hands, and breathing on him the Holy Ghost, but a solemn *testimony*, with a protestation, "*Thou art a priest*": ceremonies never used by any but God, nor in the investiture of any but Christ, nor in his investiture into any office but the priesthood. At his coronation we hear nothing, but the Lord said, "*Sit thou on my right hand*": the rule of the whole world is imposed upon our Saviour by command; and even in this did Christ show his obedience to his Father, that he took upon him the government of his church. But at the consecration of Christ we have a great deal more of ceremony and solemnity. God his Father taketh an oath, and particularly expresseth the nature and condition of his office, *a priesthood for ever after the order of Melchizedek*: and he confirmeth it unto him for ever, saying, "*Thou art a priest for ever.*"—*Daniel Featley, in "Clavis Mystica."* 1636.

Verse 4.—What doctrine doth the Scripture afford more comfortable to a drooping soul than this, that *God hath sworn his Son a priest for ever*, to sanctify our persons, and purge our sins, and tender all our petitions to his Father? What sin is so heinous, for which such a priest cannot satisfy by the oblation of himself? what cause so desperate, in which such an advocate if he will plead, may not prevail? We may be sure God will not be hard to be intreated of us, who himself hath appointed us such an intercessor, to whom he can deny nothing; and to that end hath appointed him to sit at his right hand to make intercession for us.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 4.—"*And will not repent.*" The meaning of this phrase is, that the priesthood of Christ is not like that of Aaron, which was after a time to expire, and is now actually with all the ceremonial law abolished, but a priesthood never to be altered or changed.—*Daniel Featley.*

Verse 4.—"*Thou art a priest.*" The reasons which moved our Lord to take upon him the office of priest are conceived to be these. 1. Because the salvation and redemption of mankind, wrought by the sacrifice of his priesthood, being a most noble work, and not inferior to the creation, it was not fit that any should have the honour of it, but the Son of God. 2. Neither was it agreeable that any should offer him, who was the only sacrifice that could expiate the sins of the whole world, but himself: therefore by offering himself he added infinite worth to the sacrifice, and great honour to the priesthood of the Gospel. For, as the gold sanctifieth not the altar, but the altar the gold; so it may be truly said without impeachment to the dignity of that calling, that Christ was rather an honour to the priesthood, than the priesthood an addition to him. For what got he by the priesthood which cost him his life? What preferment could it be to him, to take upon him an office, whereby he was to abase himself below himself, and be put to an ignominious and accursed death? What were we vile miscreants, conceived and born in original sin, and soiled with the filth of numberless actual transgressions, that to purge and cleanse our polluted souls and defiled consciences, the second person in the Trinity should be made a Priest? It was wonderful humility in him to wash his disciples' feet; but in his divine person to wash our unclean souls, is as far above human conceit, as it seemeth below divine majesty. There is nothing so impure as a foul conscience; no matter so filthy, no corruption so rotten and unsavoury as is found in the sores of an exulcerated mind; yet the Son of God vouchsafed to wash and bathe them in his own blood. O bottomless depth of humility and mercy! Other priests were appointed by men for the service of God, but he

was appointed by God for the service and salvation of men: other priests spilt the blood of beasts to save men, but he shed his own blood to save us, more like beasts than men: other priests offered sacrifice for themselves, he offered himself for a sacrifice: other priests were fed by the sacrifices which the people brought, but he feeds us with the sacrifice of his own body and blood: lastly, others were appointed priests but for a time, he was ordained a priest "*for ever.*"—*Daniel Featley.*

Verse 4.—"*Thou art a priest.*" This word, "*Thou art,*" is *verbum constitutivum*, a "constituting word," whereon the priesthood of Christ was founded. And it may be considered,—1. As *declarative* of God's eternal decree, with the covenant between the Father and the Son, whereby he was designed unto this office. 2. As *demonstrative* of his mission, or his actual sending to the discharge of his office. These words are the symbol and solemn sign of God's conferring that honour upon him, which gave him his instalment. 3. As *predictive*, for there is included in them a supposition that God would prepare a body for him, wherein he might exercise his priesthood, and which he might offer up unto him.—*John Owen.*

Verse 4.—"*Melchizedek.*" Some heretics of old affirmed that he was the *Holy Ghost.* Others, that he was an *angel.* Others, that he was *Shem*, the son of Noah. Others, that he was a *Canaanite*, extraordinarily raised up by God to be a priest of the Gentiles. Others, that he was *Christ himself*, manifested by a special dispensation and privilege unto Abraham in the flesh, who is said to have seen his day, and rejoiced, John viii. 56. Difference there is also about *Salem*, the place of which he was king. Some take it for *Jerusalem*, as Josephus and most of the ancients. Others for a city in the half-tribe of Manasseh, within the river Jordan, where Hierom reports that some ruins of the palace of Melchizedek were in his days conceived to remain. Tedious I might be in insisting on this point who Melchizedek was. But when I find the Holy Ghost purposely concealing his name, genealogy, beginning, ending, and descent, and that to special purpose, I cannot but wonder that men should toil themselves in the dark to find out that of which they have not the least ground of solid conjecture, and the inevidence whereof is expressly recorded, to make Melchizedek thereby the fitter type of Christ's everlasting priesthood. —*Edward Reynolds.*

Verse 4.—"*Melchizedek.*" These things concerning are certain: *First, That he was a mere man, and no more;* for, 1. "Every high priest" was to be "taken from among men," Heb. v. 1;—so that the Son of God himself could not have been a priest had he not assumed our nature: 2. That if he were more than a man, there would be no mystery in his being introduced in Scripture as, "without father, without mother, without pedigree," for none but men have such: 3. Without this conception of him there is no force in the apostle's argument against the Jews. *Secondly, That he came not to his office by the right of primogeniture* (which includes a genealogy) or by any way of succession, but was raised up and immediately called of God thereunto; for in that respect Christ is said to be a priest after his order. *Thirdly, That he had no successor on the earth,* nor could have; for there was no law to constitute an order of succession, and he was a priest only after an extraordinary call. These things belong unto faith in this matter, and no more. . . . . The first personal instituted type of Christ was a priest; this was Melchizedec. There were before *real* instituted types of his work, as sacrifices: and there were *moral* types of his person, as Adam, Abel, and Noah, which represented him in sundry things; but the first person who was solemnly designed to teach and represent him, by what he was and did, was a priest. And that which God taught herein was, that the foundation of all that the Lord Christ had to do in and for the church was laid in his priestly office, whereby he made atonement and reconciliation for sin. Everything else that he doth is built on the supposition of his priesthood. And we must begin in the application where God begins in the exhibition. An interest in the effects of the

priestly office of Christ is that which in the first place we ought to look after. This being attained, we shall be willing to be taught and ruled by him. It may not be amiss to observe the likeness between Melchizedec and Christ. As for our Lord ;

1. He was said to be, and he really was, and he only, first *the king of righteousness, and then the king of peace ;* seeing he alone brought in everlasting righteousness and made peace with God for sinners. In his kingdom alone are these things to be found.

2. He was really and truly the *priest of the most high God ;* and properly he was so alone. He offered that sacrifice, and made that atonement, which was signified by all the sacrifices offered by holy men from the foundation of the world.

3. He *blesseth all the faithful, as Abraham, the father of the faithful, was blessed by Melchizedec.* In him were they to be blessed, by him are they blessed,—through him delivered from the curse, and all the fruits of it ; nor are they partakers of any blessing but from him.

4. He *receiveth all the homage of his people,* all their grateful acknowledgments of the love and favour of God, in the conquest of their spiritual adversaries, and deliverance from them, as Melchizedec received the tenth of the spoils from Abraham.

5. He was really *without progenitors or predecessors* in his office ; nor would I exclude that mystical sense from the intention of the place, that he was without father as to his human nature, and without mother as to his divine.

6. He was a *priest without genealogy,* or derivation of his pedigree from the loins of Aaron, or any other that ever was a priest in the world, and moreover, mysteriously, was of a generation which none can declare.

7. He had, *in his divine person,* as the high priest of the church, *neither beginning of days nor end of life,* as no such thing is reported of Melchizedec ; for the death which he underwent, in the discharge of his office, being not the death of his whole person, but of his human nature only, no interruption of his endless office did ensue thereon. For although the person of the Son of God died, whence God is said to "redeem his church with his own blood," Acts xx. 28 ; yet he died not in his whole person : but in his divine nature was still alive. Absolutely, therefore, and in respect of his office, he had neither beginning of days nor end of life.

8. He was *really the Son of God,* as Melchizedec in many circumstances was made like to the Son of God.

9. He *alone abideth a priest forever ;* whereof we must particularly treat afterwards.—*Condensed from John Owen.*

Verse 5.—"*The Lord . . . . shall strike through kings,*" etc. He really threatens such great heads in an awful manner, that if they will not hear, and cannot obey, they shall be terrified to death. And assuredly he would willingly, by these means, allure them to repentance, and persuade them to turn, and to cease from raging against the Lord. But if they will not, they shall know against whom it is that they go on. . . . . This is our consolation which upholds us, and makes our heart joyful and glad against the persecution and rage of the world, that we have such a Lord, who not only delivers us from sin and eternal death, but also protects us, and delivers us in sufferings and temptations, so that we do not sink under them. And though men rage in a most savage manner against Christians, yet neither the gospel nor Christianity shall perish ; but their heads shall be destroyed against it. If their persecutions were to go on unceasingly Christianity could not remain, wherefore he gives them a time, and says he will connive at them for a while, but not longer than till the hour comes which he here calls the "*day of his wrath.*" And if they will not now cease in the name of God, they must then cease in the name of the devil.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 5.—"*Shall strike through kings.*" *To strike through* notes a complete

victory and full confusion of the enemy, an incurable wound, that they may stagger, and fall, and rise up no more, and that affliction may not arise a second time, Nahum i. 9 ; 1 Sam. xxvi. 8. The only difficulty is what is meant by "kings." For which we must note that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, and his war spiritual, and therefore his enemies for the most part spiritual.—*Edward Reynolds.*

Verse 5.—"*In the day of his wrath.*" Note that it is not simply said, he will strike through kings in his wrath, but in the *day* of his wrath. Therefore as there is a time of grace and patience, so there is also an appointed time of wrath and vengeance of God. Frequent mention is made of this in the sacred Scriptures, that we may be admonished that the wicked will not be left always unpunished, because they contemn the patience of God, aye, provoke his anger ; but that there will be a time when they will experience the wrath of God. Thus, armed with patience, we should persevere in the practice of piety, nor be turned aside from it, either by the example of the wicked, or from fear of them. —*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verses 5, 6, 7.

> The sentenc'd heathen he shall slay,
> And fill with carcasses his way,
> Till he hath struck earth's tyrants dead ;
> But in the high-way brooks shall first,
> Like a poor pilgrim, slake his thirst,
> And then in triumph raise his head.
>
> *N. Brady and N. Tate.*

Verse 6.—"*He shall fill the places with the dead bodies.*" This notes *the greatness* of the victory, that none should be left to bury the dead. There shall be an universal destruction of wicked men *together* in the day of God's wrath, they shall be bound up in bundles, and heaped for damnation, Matt. xiii. 30 ; Psal. xxxvii. 38 ; Isai. i. 28 ; lxvi. 17. And it notes the *shame* and dishonour of the enemy, they shall be like dung upon the face of the earth, and shall be beholden to their victors for a base and dishonourable burial, as we see in the great battle with Gog and Magog, Ezekiel xxxix. 11—16.—*Edward Reynolds.*

Verse 6.—"*Dead bodies.*" Either the corpses of the vanquished enemy ; or (possibly) the living bodies of men in a state of *servitude*, as in Gen. xlvii. 18 ; Neh. ix. 37. (The construction as in Exod. xv. 9.) In the latter case, the meaning may be : that the bodies of those who had been enslaved by the Usurper, Death, were now claimed back by their rightful Lord. The full number is claimed back. The "last enemy" being destroyed, "*all* things" are brought beneath Christ's sway.—*William Kay.*

Verse 6.—"*The heads.*" Rather, *the head ;* doubtless, the head of the Old Serpent (according to the prophecy in Gen. iii. 15), who acts in all who resist Christ. The verb *machats*, which is used here, is employed to describe the prophetical and typical act of Jael, smiting the *head* of God's enemy, Sisera (Jud. v. 26 and iv. 22) ; and it is used in Ps. lxviii. 21, which describes Christ's victory, "God shall *wound* the *head* of his enemies"; and also by Hab. iii. 13, "Thou *woundest* the *head* out of the house of the wicked."—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 7.—"*He shall drink of the brook,*" etc. He describeth the passion of Christ and his glory. "*In the way,*" saith he, that is, in his life while he is in this misery, "*he shall drink out of the brook,*" that is, he shall suffer and be overcome. For to drink out of the cup is to suffer : but to drink out of the brook, is to be altogether full of trouble, to be vexed and tormented and utterly to be overwhelmed with a strong stream of troubles. Thus was it in David's mind to declare the passion of Christ. Afterward he saith, "*therefore shall he lift up the head.*" After the passion followeth the glory, with the resurrection and ascension. Paul, (Philip. ii.) speaketh of both, and saith : "Christ humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God hath exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name," etc.—*Myles Coverdale*, 1487—1568.

Verse 7.—I conceive that the "*brook*" here spoken of was not intended to give us the idea of a clear brook of refreshing water, which was to afford the Redeemer strength to endure the amazing conflict; as the drinking of the water enabled Gideon's chosen band of men to go forth to battle against the Midianites. No; in our Lord's case it was a polluted and turbid stream. Like the water of *Marah*, which the Israelites could not drink, it was bitter; for sin had made it so. It bore along with it, as it flowed, the curse of the broken law, and the vengeance of offended justice, and the wrath of the eternal God. It was pain, sorrow, suffering, death. *This* was the "*brook*" of which he drank. The "cup" which his Father gave him to drink was filled with the bitter water of this "*brook*"; and he may be said to have first put his lips to it, when he declared to his disciples, in his way to Gethsemane, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death."

But it is stated in the text that this "*brook*" was "*in the way.*" It is described here as running by the path in which the Redeemer was going in order to the accomplishment of his great work of man's salvation; that work which he had engaged in the everlasting covenant to perform; and by the performance of which, man could alone be accepted of God. The sin of man was the *source* from whence this water issued; and it flowed along in the Saviour's "*way*," through the wilderness of this world to his kingdom of glory in the next; as the brook *Kidron*, red with the blood of the typical sacrifices, flowed in his way to *Calvary*.—*Fountain Elwin*, 1842.

Verse 7.—In the expositions of most of the ancients and moderns, we are told that he drank of the brook, 1, of *mortality* by his incarnation; 2, of strictness and *hardness* in all his passage, by his voluntary wants and poverty; 3, of the *strong potion of the law*, by his exact obedience and subjection; 4, of the *Jews' malice*, by their continual indignities; 5, of the *floods of Belial*, by apparent and unknown temptations; 6, of the *heaviest wrath* of his Father, by his unspeakable agony and bloody sweat in the garden. And last of all, *of death itself* on the cross, by his sad and extreme passion.—*John Prideaux.*

Verse 7.—"*He shall drink of the brook in the way.*" These words were understood by Junius and Tremellius long ago as meaning, "He shall steadily press on to victory, as generals of energy act, who in pursuing routed foes, stay not to indulge themselves in meat or drink." Hengstenberg and others substantially approve of this view. While a few hold that allusion may be made to Samson at Ramath-Lehi (as if the words spoke of Christ having a secret spring of refreshment when needful). Most seem inclined to take *Gideon* as the type that best expresses the idea. Pressing on to victory, Messiah, like Gideon, "faint yet pursuing" as he passed over Jordan, shall not desist till all is won. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he hath set judgment in the earth." Perhaps the full idea is this:—His career was irresistibly successful like that of Gideon; for he allowed nothing to detain him, nor did he shrink in the enterprise from any fatigue, nor did he stop to indulge the flesh. If we take it thus, there is both the Humiliation and the Exaltation of the Son of Man contained in the words; and Phil. ii. 8, 9 supplies a commentary.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 7.—"Schnurrer," says Rosenmüller, "seems to have perceived the meaning of the verse, which he gives in the following words:—'Though fatigued with the slaughter of his enemies, yet he will not desist; but, having refreshed himself with water from the nearest stream, will exert his renovated strength in the pursuit of the routed foe.'"—*Messianic Psalms.*

Verse 7.—Christ shall "*lift up the head*" by way of triumphing and rejoicing, when he shall have taken full vengeance of his adversaries, and freed, not himself only, but the whole body of his church from the assaults and dangers of all enemies. We see now that oftentimes, though not in himself, yet in his members, he is fain to hang down the head, and to wear the badges of reproach

and shame, whilst the ungodly vaunt themselves (Job xxxi. 26) and in their hearts despise the righteous, accounting more vilely of them than of the dust of their feet.—*Robert Abbot.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Here the Holy Ghost begins with the *kingdom of Christ*, which he describeth and magnifieth,—1. By his *unction* and *ordination* thereunto, by the word or decree of his Father: "*The Lord said.*" 2. By the *greatness of his person* in himself, while yet he is nearly allied in blood and nature unto us: "*My Lord.*" 3 By the *glory*, power, and heavenliness of his kingdom, for in the administration thereof he sitteth at the right hand of his Father: "*Sit thou at my right hand.*" 4. By the *continuance* and victories thereof: "*Until I make thy foes thy footstool.*"—*Edward Reynolds.*

Verse 1.—"*My Lord.*" I. Christ's condescending nearness to us does not destroy our reverence: he was David's son, and yet he calls him Lord; he is our brother, bridegroom, and so on, and yet our *Lord*. II. Christ's glory does not diminish his nearness to us, or familiarity with us. Sitting on the throne as Lord, he is yet "*my* Lord." III. It is under the double aspect as Lord, and yet ours, that Jehovah regards him, and speaks with him, and ordains him to the priesthood. Ever in these two lights let us regard him.

Verse 1.—"*Sit,*" etc. I. Our Lord's quiet amid passing events. II. The abundance of his present power. III. The working of all history towards the ultimate end, which will be—IV. His easy victory: putting his foot on his foes as readily as we tread on a footstool.

Verse 2.—I. What is that rod? The gospel (Illustrated by Moses' rod). II. Who sends it? "The Lord." III. Whence it comes? Out of the church of God. IV. What is the result? Jesus reigns.

Verse 3.—A willing people and an immutable Leader. I. The promise made to Christ concerning his people: "Thy people shall be willing," etc. 1. A promise of time: "In the day," etc. 2. Of persons: "Thy people." 3. Of disposition: "Shall be willing." 4. Of character: "In the beauties of holiness." 5. The majestic figure employed: "From the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." II. The promise made to Christ concerning himself: "Thou hast the dew of thy youth." Jesus Christ has the dew of his youth personally, doctrinally, and mystically, being surrounded by new converts, who are as the early dew.—*Spurgeon's Sermons, No.* 74.

Verse 3.—This is a prophecy of the subjects of Christ's kingdom. I. Who they are; "Thy people." 1. A people. This denotes distinction, separation, similarity, organization. They are not a confused rabble, but a united community. 2. *His* people. By gift, by purchase, by effectual calling. II. What they are. 1. A loyal people: "willing." 2. A conquered people: "in the day of thy power." 3. A holy people: "in the beauties of holiness." 4. A numerous people: "from the womb of the morning," etc. The number of converts at the first proclamation of Christ's gospel was but the dew of his youth.—*G. R.*

Verse 3.—First, *the internal evidence of Christ's kingdom is in his people's willingness:* "Thy people shall be willingness—thy people shall be a people all willing"—all volunteers, not pressed men. Secondly, *the external evidence of it lies in his people's holiness;* "the beauties of holiness;" or as it may be rendered—"in the magnificence of his sanctuary," for the ornaments of the sanctuary and the dress of the priests were very splendid. When you once give yourselves to God, you become temples of God; and sanctity must adorn that heart which is a living temple of the Holy Ghost.—*J. Bennett, in a Sermon,* 1829.

Verse 3.—All true followers of Jesus are (1) priests—beauties of holiness are their sacerdotal robes; (2) soldiers—"in the day of thine armies;" (3) volunteers: (4) benefactors—as the dew.—*Suggested by a paper in The Baptist Magazine.*

Verse 3.—Here we have a cluster of subjects:—the willingness of the Lord's people, the beauty of holiness, young converts the life and glory of the church, the mystery of conversion, and so on.

Verse 4.—The eternal priesthood of Christ. On what its perpetuity is founded and the blessed results flowing therefrom.

Verse 4.—These words offer three points of special observation. 1. The ceremony used at the consecration of our Lord: "*The Lord sware.*" 2. The office conferred upon him by this rite or ceremony: "*Thou art a priest.*" 3. The prerogatives of his office; which office is here declared to be, (1), Perpetual, "*for ever.*" (2), Regular, "*after the order.*" (3), Royal, "*of Melchizedek.*"—*Daniel Featley.*

Verse 4.—Melchizedek: a fruitful subject. See notes.

Verse 5.—The certain overthrow of every power which opposes the gospel.

Verse 6.—The fearful calamities which have happened to nations through their sinful rejection of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 7.—Christ's alacrity, self-denial, and simplicity, the causes of his success. Example to be imitated.

Verse 7.—Christ's humiliation and exaltation.

WORKS ON THE HUNDRED AND TENTH PSALM.

The Exaltation of the Kingdome and Priesthood of Christ. In certaine Sermons vpon the 110 Psalme: Preached in the Cathedrall Church and city of Worcester, in the time of Christmasse: anno Domini: 1596. By Rob. Abbot, doctor of Diuinitie, sometime felow of Baliol Colledge in Oxford. Londini, Impensis G. Bishop. 1601. [4to.]

An Explication of the Hundreth and Tenth Psalme. . . . Being the Substance of severall Sermons preached at Lincolns Inne; by Edward Reynolds [afterwards Bishop of Norwich]. 4to. 2nd edition. London, 1635. [Also in "Reynolds' Works."]

In the works of John Boys, 1626, folio, pp. 809—821, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

An incorruptible Key Composed of the CX. Psalme, wherewith You may open the rest of the holy Scriptures. . . . . *By* Samuel Gorton, *Gent. and at the time of the penning hereof, in the place of Judicature (upon* Aquethneck, alias Road Island*) of Providence Plantations in the Nanhyganset Bay, New England.* Printed in the Yeere 1647. [4to.]

A new interpretation of the Sixty-eighth Psalm. To which is added, an Exposition of the Hundred and tenth Psalm, proposed in a Sermon, preached before the University of Oxford, at St. Mary's, on Sunday, October 27, 1811. By the Rev. Richard Dixon, A.M., F.R.S. . . . Oxford, 1811. [4to.]

In "The Golden Diary of Heart Converse with Jesus in the Book of Psalms, by the Rev. Dr. Edersheim. . . . London: 1873," there is a short meditation on this Psalm.

PSALM CXI.

There is no title to this psalm, but it is an alphabetical hymn of praise, having for its subject the works of the Lord in creation, providence, and grace. The sweet singer dwells upon the one idea that God should be known by his people, and that this knowledge when turned into practical piety is man's true wisdom, and the certain cause of lasting adoration. Many are ignorant of what their Creator has done, and hence they are foolish in heart, and silent as to the praises of God: this evil can only be removed by a remembrance of God's works, and a diligent study of them; to this, therefore, the psalm is meant to arouse us. It may be called THE PSALM OF GOD'S WORKS *intended to excite us to the work of praise.*

DIVISION.—*The psalmist begins with an invitation to praise, verse* 1; *and then proceeds to furnish us with matter for adoration in God's works and his dealings with his people,* 2—9. *He closes his song with a commendation of the worship of the Lord, and of the men who practice it.*

EXPOSITION.

PRAISE ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.

1, "*Praise ye the* LORD," or, *Hallelujah!* All ye his saints unite in adoring Jehovah, who worketh so gloriously. Do it now, do it always: do it heartily, do it unanimously, do it eternally. Even if others refuse, take care that ye have always a song for your God. Put away all doubt, question, murmuring, and rebellion, and give yourselves up to the praising of Jehovah, both with your lips and in your lives. "*I will praise the* LORD *with my whole heart.*" The sweet singer commences the song, for his heart is all on flame: whether others will follow him or not, he will at once begin and long continue. What we preach we should practise. The best way to enforce an exhortation is to set an example; but we must let that example be of the best kind, or we may lead others to do the work in a limping manner. David brought nothing less than his whole heart to the duty; all his love went out towards God, and all his zeal, his skill, and his ardour went with it. Jehovah the one and undivided God cannot be acceptably praised with a divided heart, neither should we attempt so to dishonour him; for our whole heart is little enough for his glory, and there can be no reason why it should not all be lifted up in his praise. All his works are praiseworthy, and therefore all our nature should adore him. "*In the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation*";—whether with few or with many he would pour forth his whole heart and soul in praise, and whether the company was made up of select spirits or of the general mass of the people he would continue in the same exercise. For the choicest society there can be no better engagement than praise, and for the general assembly nothing can be more fitting. For the church and for the congregation, for the family or the community, for the private chamber of pious friendship, or the great hall of popular meeting, the praise of the Lord is suitable; and at the very least the true heart should sing hallelujah in any and every place. Why should we fear the presence of men? The best of men will join us in our song, and if the common sort will not do so, our example will be a needed rebuke to them. In any case let us praise God, whether the hearers be a little band of saints or a mixed multitude. Come, dear readers, he who pens this comment is in his heart magnifying the Lord: will you not pause for a moment and join in the delightful exercise?

2 The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

3 His work *is* honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7 The works of his hands *are* verity and judgment; all his commandments *are* sure.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightness.

9 He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name.

2. "*The works of the* LORD *are great.*" In design, in size, in number, in excellence, all the works of the Lord are great. Even the little things of God are great. In some point of view or other each one of the productions of his power, or the deeds of his wisdom, will appear to be great to the wise in heart. "*Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*" Those who love their Maker delight in his handiworks, they perceive that there is more in them than appears upon the surface, and therefore they bend their minds to study and understand them. The devout naturalist ransacks nature, the earnest student of history pries into hidden facts and dark stories, and the man of God digs into the mines of Scripture, and hoards up each grain of its golden truth. God's works are worthy of our researches, they yield us instruction and pleasure wonderfully blended, and they grow upon, appearing to be far greater, after investigation than before. Men's works are noble from a distance; God's works are great when sought out. Delitzsch reads the passage, "Worthy of being sought after in all their purposes," and this also is a grand truth, for the end and design which God hath in all that he makes or does is equally admirable with the work itself. The hidden wisdom of God is the most marvellous part of his works, and hence those who do not look below the surface miss the best part of what he would teach us. Because the works are great they cannot be seen all at once, but must be looked into with care, and this seeking out is of essential service to us by educating our faculties, and strengthening our spiritual eye gradually to bear the light of the divine glory. It is well for us that all things cannot be seen at a glance, for the search into their mysteries is as useful to us as the knowledge which we thereby attain. The history of the Lord's dealings with his people is especially a fit subject for the meditation of reverent minds who find therein a sweet solace, and a never-failing source of delight.

3. "*His work is honourable and glorious.*" His one special work, the salvation of his people, is here mentioned as distinguished from his many other *works*. This reflects honour and glory upon him. It is deservedly the theme of the highest praise, and compels those who understand it and experience it to ascribe all honour and glory unto the Lord. Its conception, its sure foundations, its gracious purpose, its wise arrangements, its gift of Jesus as Redeemer, its application of redemption by the Holy Ghost in regeneration and sanctification, and all else which make up the one glorious whole, all redound to the infinite honour of Him who contrived and carried out so astounding a method of salvation. No other work can be compared with it: it honours both the Saviour and the saved, and while it brings glory to God it also brings us to glory. There is

none like the God of Jeshurun, and there is no salvation like that which he has wrought for his people. "*And his righteousness endureth for ever.*" In the work of grace righteousness is not forgotten, nor deprived of its glory ; rather, it is honoured in the eyes of the intelligent universe. The bearing of guilt by our great Substitute proved that not even to effect the purposes of his grace would the Lord forget his righteousness ; no future strain upon his justice can ever be equal to that which it has already sustained in the bruising of his dear Son ; it must henceforth assuredly endure for ever. Moreover, the righteousness of God in the whole plan can never now be suspected of failure, for all that it requires is already performed, its demands are satisfied by the double deed of our Lord in enduring the vengeance due, and in rendering perfect obedience to the law. Caprice does not enter into the government of the Lord, the rectitude of it is and must for ever be beyond all question. In no single deed of God can unrighteousness be found, nor shall there ever be : this is the very glory of his work, and even its adversaries cannot gainsay it. Let believers, therefore, praise him evermore, and never blush to speak of that work which is so honourable and glorious.

4. "*He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.*" He meant them to remain in the recollection of his people, and they do so : partly because they are in themselves memorable, and because also he has taken care to record them by the pen of inspiration, and has written them upon the hearts of his people by his Holy Spirit. By the ordinances of the Mosaic law, the coming out of Egypt, the sojourn in the wilderness, and other memorabilia of Israel's history were constantly brought before the minds of the people, and their children were by such means instructed in the wonders which God had wrought in old time. Deeds such as God has wrought are not to be admired for an hour and then forgotten, they are meant to be perpetual signs and instructive tokens to all coming generations ; and especially are they designed to confirm the faith of his people in the divine love, and to make them know that "*the* LORD *is gracious and full of compassion.*" They need not fear to trust his grace for the future, for they remember it in the past. Grace is as conspicuous as righteousness in the great work of God, yea, a fulness of tender love is seen in all that he has done. He treats his people with great consideration for their weakness and infirmity ; having the same pity for them as a father hath towards his children. Should we not praise him for this? A silver thread of lovingkindness runs through the entire fabric of God's work of salvation and providence, and never once is it left out in the whole piece. Let the memories of his saints bear witness to this fact with grateful joy.

5. "*He hath given meat unto them that fear him.*" Or *spoil*, as some read it, for the Lord's people both in coming out of Egypt and at other times have been enriched from their enemies. Not only in the wilderness with manna, but everywhere else by his providence he has supplied the necessities of his believing people. Somewhere or other they have had food convenient for them, and that in times of great scarcity. As for spiritual meat, that has been plentifully furnished them in Christ Jesus ; they have been fed with the finest of the wheat, and made to feast on royal dainties. His word is as nourishing to the soul as bread to the body, and there is such an abundance of it that no heir of heaven shall ever be famished. Truly the fear of the Lord is wisdom, since it secures to a man the supply of all that he needs for soul and body. "*He will ever be mindful of his covenant.*" He could not let his people lack meat because he was in covenant with them, and they can never want in the future, for he will continue to act upon the terms of that covenant. No promise of the Lord shall fall to the ground, nor will any part of the great compact of eternal love be revoked or allowed to sink into oblivion. The covenant of grace is the plan of the great work which the Lord works out for his people, and it will never be departed from : the Lord has set his hand and seal to it, his glory and honour are involved in it, yea, his very name hangs upon it, and he will not even in the least jot or tittle cease to be mindful of it. Of this the

feeding of his people is the pledge : he would not so continually supply their needs if he meant after all to destroy them. Upon this most blessed earnest let us settle our minds ; let us rest in the faithfulness of the Lord, and praise him with all our hearts every time that we eat bread or feed upon his word.

6. "*He hath shewed his people the power of his works.*" They have seen what he is able to do and what force he is prepared to put forth on their behalf. This power Israel saw in physical works, and we in spiritual wonders, for we behold the matchless energy of the Holy Ghost and feel it in our own souls. In times of dire distress the Lord has put forth such energy of grace that we have been astonished at his power ; and this was part of his intent in bringing us into such conditions that he might reveal to us the arm of his strength. Could we ever have known it so well if we had not been in pressing need of his help ? We may well turn this verse into a prayer and ask to see more and more the power of the Lord at work among us in these latter days. O Lord, let us now see how mightily thou canst work in the saving of sinners and in preserving and delivering thine own people. "*That he may give them the heritage of the heathen.*" He put forth all his power to drive out the Canaanites and bring in his people. Even thus may it please his infinite wisdom to give to his church the heathen for her inheritance in the name of Jesus. Nothing but great power can effect this, but it will surely be accomplished in due season.

7. "*The works of his hands are verity and judgment.*" Truth and justice are conspicuous in all that Jehovah does. Nothing like artifice or crooked policy can ever be seen in his proceedings ; he acts faithfully and righteously towards his people, and with justice and impartiality to all mankind. This also should lead us to praise him, since it is of the utmost advantage to us to live under a sovereign whose laws, decrees, acts, and deeds are the essence of truth and justice. "*All his commandments are sure.*" All that he has appointed or decreed shall surely stand, and his precepts which he has proclaimed shall be found worthy of our obedience, for surely they are founded in justice and are meant for our lasting good. He is no fickle despot, commanding one thing one day and another another, but his commands remain absolutely unaltered, their necessity equally unquestionable, their excellence permanently proven, and their reward eternally secure. Take the word *commandments* to relate either to his decrees or his precepts, and we have in each case an important sense ; but it seems more in accordance with the connection to take the first sense and consider the words to refer to the ordinances, appointments, or decrees of the great King.

> "Whate'er the mighty Lord decrees,
> Shall stand for ever sure.
> The settled purpose of his heart
> To ages shall endure."

8. "*They stand fast for ever and ever.*" That is to say, his purposes, commands, and courses of action. The Lord is not swayed by transient motives, or moved by the circumstances of the hour ; immutable principles rule in the courts of Jehovah, and he pursues his eternal purposes without the shadow of a turning. Our works are too often as wood, hay, and stubble, but his doings are as gold, silver, and precious stones. We take up a purpose for a while and then exchange it for another, but he is of one mind, and none can turn him : he acts in eternity and for eternity, and hence what he works abides for ever. Much of this lasting character arises out of the fact which is next mentioned, namely, that they "*are done in truth and uprightness.*" Nothing stands but that which is upright. Falsehood soon vanishes, for it is a mere show, but truth has salt in it which preserves it from decay. God always acts according to the glorious principles of truth and integrity, and hence there is no need of alteration or revocation ; his works will endure till the end of time.

9. "*He sent redemption unto his people.*" When they were in Egypt he sent not only a deliverer, but an actual deliverance ; not only a redeemer, but

complete redemption. He has done the like spiritually for all his people, having first by blood purchased them out of the hand of the enemy, and then by power rescued them from the bondage of their sins. Redemption we can sing of as an accomplished act: it has been wrought for us, sent to us, and enjoyed by us, and we are in very deed the Lord's redeemed. "*He hath commanded his covenant for ever.*" His divine decree has made the covenant of his grace a settled and eternal institution: redemption by blood proves that the covenant cannot be altered, for it ratifies and establishes it beyond all recall. This, too, is reason for the loudest praise. Redemption is a fit theme for the heartiest music, and when it is seen to be connected with gracious engagements from which the Lord's truth cannot swerve, it becomes a subject fitted to arouse the soul to an ecstacy of gratitude. Redemption and the covenant are enough to make the tongue of the dumb sing. "*Holy and reverend is his name.*" Well may he say this. The whole name or character of God is worthy of profoundest awe, for it is perfect and complete, whole or holy. It ought not to be spoken without solemn thought, and never heard without profound homage. His name is to be trembled at, it is something terrible; even those who know him best rejoice with trembling before him. How good men can endure to be called "reverend" we know not. Being unable to discover any reason why our fellow-men should reverence *us*, we half suspect that in other men there is not very much which can entitle them to be called reverend, very reverend, right reverend, and so on. It may seem a trifling matter, but for that very reason we would urge that the foolish custom should be allowed to fall into disuse.

10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments:* his praise endureth for ever.

10. "*The fear of the* LORD *is the beginning of wisdom.*" It is its first principle, but it is also its head and chief attainment. The word "beginning" in Scripture sometimes means the chief; and true religion is at once the first element of wisdom, and its chief fruit. To know God so as to walk aright before him is the greatest of all the applied sciences. Holy reverence of God leads us to praise him, and this is the point which the psalm drives at, for it is a wise act on the part of a creature towards his Creator. "*A good understanding have all they that do his commandments.*" Obedience to God proves that our judgment is sound. Why should he not be obeyed? Does not reason itself claim obedience for the Lord of all? Only a man void of understanding will ever justify rebellion against the holy God. Practical godliness is the test of wisdom. Men may know and be very orthodox, they may talk and be very eloquent, they may speculate and be very profound; but the best proof of their intelligence must be found in their actually doing the will of the Lord. The former part of the psalm taught us the doctrine of God's nature and character, by describing his works; the second part supplies the practical lesson by drawing the inference that to worship and obey him is the dictate of true wisdom. We joyfully own that it is so. "*His praise endureth for ever.*" The praises of God will never cease, because his works will always excite adoration, and it will always be the wisdom of men to extol their glorious Lord. Some regard this sentence as referring to those who fear the Lord—their praise shall endure for ever: and, indeed, it is true that those who lead obedient lives shall obtain honour of the Lord, and commendations which will abide for ever. A word of approbation from the mouth of God will be a meed of honour which will outshine all the decorations which kings and emperors can bestow.

Lord, help us to study thy works, and henceforth to breathe out hallelujahs as long as we live.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—This is the first alphabetical psalm which is regular throughout. The four former alphabetical psalms, namely, ix. and x., xxxiv. and xxxvii., are irregular and defective in many particulars, for the rectification of which neither Hebrew MS. editions nor ancient versions afford sanction and authority. It is singular that not only are Psalms cxi. and cxii. perfectly regular, but, furthermore, that not one various reading of note or importance occurs in either of these psalms.—*John Noble Coleman.*

Whole Psalm.—The following translation is given to enable the reader to realize the alphabetical character of the psalm. It is taken from "The Psalms Chronologically Arranged. By Four Friends."

All my heart shall praise Jehovah,	1
Before the congregation of the righteous;	
Deeds of goodness are the deeds of Jehovah,	2
Earnestly desired of all them that have pleasure therein;	
For his righteousness endureth for ever,	3
Glorious and honourable is his work;	
He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered,	4
In Jehovah is compassion and goodness;	
Jehovah hath given meat to them that fear him,	5
Keeping his covenant for ever,	
Learning his people the power of his works,	6
Making them to possess the heritage of the heathen;	
Nought save truth and equity are the works of his hands,	7
Ordered and sure are his commands,	
Planted fast for ever and ever,	8
Righteous and true are his testimonies;	
Salvation hath he sent unto his people,	9
Their covenant hath he made fast for ever;	
Upright and holy is his name,	10
Verily, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,	
Yea, a good understanding have all they that do thereafter;	
Zealously shall he be praised for ever.	

Whole Psalm.—The general opinion of interpreters is, that this and some of the following psalms were usually sung at the eating of the Paschal lamb, of which custom mention is also made, Matt. xxvi., that Christ and the disciples sang a hymn before they went out into the garden.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Whole Psalm.—The two psalms, cxi. and cxii., resemble one another in construction, alphabetical arrangement, and general tone and manner. They are connected in this way: Ps. cxi. sets forth the greatness, mercy, and righteousness of God: Ps. cxii. the reflection of these attributes in the greatness, ver. 2, mercy, ver. 5, and righteousness, ver. 4, 9, of his chosen. The correspondence of purpose in the two psalms is important to the right appreciation of some difficulties connected with the latter psalm.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

Whole Psalm.—The scope of this Psalm is to stir up all to praise God, and that for so many reasons as there are verses in the psalm. The exhortation is in the first words, "*Praise ye the Lord.*" The reasons follow in order. The psalm is composed so after the order of the Hebrew alphabet, as every sentence or half verse beginneth with a several letter of the A B C in order, and all the psalm is of praise only. Whence we learn in general, 1. Sometimes it is expedient to set all other things apart, and employ ourselves expressly to proclaim the praises of the Lord only; for so is done in this psalm. 2. The praises of the Lord are able to fill all the letters and words composed of letters, in all their possible junctures of composition; for so much doth the going through all the letters of the A B C point out unto us, he is Alpha and Omega, and all the middle letters of the A B C of praise. 3. The praises of the Lord are worthy to be kept in memory: for that this psalm may be the better remembered, it is composed after the manner of the A B C, and so it insinuateth thus much to us.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"*Praise ye the* LORD," etc. The exhortation is immediately succeeded by the expression of a firm resolve; the psalmist having commenced by urging the duty of gratitude upon others—"*Praise ye the* LORD." forthwith announces his determination to act upon his own advice—"*I will praise the* LORD *with my whole heart.*" Such a conjunction of ideas is fraught with several most important lessons. 1. It teaches us, very emphatically, that our preaching, if it is to carry weight and conviction, must be backed and exemplified by our conduct; that we need never expect to persuade others by arguments which are too weak to influence ourselves. 2. Another inference is similarly suggested—that our own decision should be given without reference to the result of our appeal. The psalmist did not wait to ascertain whether those whom he addressed would attend to his exhortation, but, before he could receive a reply, declared unhesitatingly the course he would himself adopt.—*W. T. Maudson, in a Sermon on Thanksgiving*, 1855.

Verse 1.—"*With my whole heart.*" That is, earnestly, and with a sincere affection; meaning also, that he would do it privately, and, as it were, within himself, as by the next words he noteth that he will do it openly.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 1.—"*With my whole heart.*" We see the stress here laid upon a whole heart, and the want of which is the great canker of all vital godliness. Men are ever attempting to unite what the word of God has declared to be incapable of union—the love of the world and of God—to give half their heart to the world, and the other half to God. Just see the energy, the entireness of every thought and feeling and effort which a man throws into a work in which he is deeply interested; the very phrase we use to describe such an one is, that "he gives his whole mind to it." Attempt to persuade him to divert his energies and divide his time with some other pursuit, and he would wonder at the folly and the ignorance that could suggest such a method of success. "Just take a hint from Satan," says some one; "see how he plies his powers on the individual, as if there were but that one, and as if he had nothing else to do but to ruin that one soul." It was a holy resolution of the Psalmist that he would praise God; and a wise one to add, "*with my whole heart.*" And we have the result of this determination in the following verses of the psalm.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 1.—Two words are used, "*assembly*" and "*congregation.*" The former implies a more private meeting of worshippers, the latter the more public. The former may apply to the family circle of those who were celebrating the passover, the latter to the public worship connected with the feast.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 2.—"*The works of the* LORD *are great.*" Their greatness is known from comparison with the works and powers of men, which, verily, die and perish quickly. We should, therefore, admire, fear, confide, obey.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 2.—"*The works of the* LORD *are great,*" etc. Their greatness is equally manifest when we turn from the *immensity* to the *variety* of his works. . . . . How great are the works of him who gives to every plant its leaf and flower and fruit; to every animal its faculties and functions; to every man his understanding, affections, and will. What an accumulative idea of the magnitude of his works do we gather from the innumerable multitudes and endless diversities of being called into existence by his powers.—*Samuel Summers*, 1837.

Verse 2.—"*The works of the* LORD *are great.*" The workman who never makes a small article, an inferior article, but makes all his articles both great and valuable, deserves much praise; and any one that will study God's works, which we think so little of by reason of their being so constantly before us, cannot fail to behold God's infinite power and wisdom in every one of them, even though he cannot comprehend them.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 2.—"*Great.*" The word גדול (gadol) "*great,*" has in the Hebrew so

extensive a range of meaning, that in the English there is no single substitute expressive enough to take its place. It denotes greatness and augmentation of various kinds. In this passage "the works of Jehovah" are described as greatly "*magnified or augmented*" in their influences and effects on the minds of men who behold them. The *greatness* ascribed to these works, is a greatness in number, in character, in dignity, in beauty, in variety, in riches.—*Benjamin Weiss.*

Verses 2, 4.—"*Great . . . sought out.*" "*Remembered.*" The works of Jehovah surpass the reach of human discovery, but are yet searched and explored with delight by all the members of his church; for, if they are too great to be understood, they are also too great to be forgotten.—*Edward Garrard Marsh.*

Verse 2.—"*Sought out.*" To see God in his creatures, and to love him and converse with him, was the employment of man in his upright state. This is so far from ceasing to be our duty, that it is the work of Christ, by faith, to bring us back to it; and therefore the most holy men are the most excellent students of God's works; and none but the holy can rightly study or know them. Your studies of physics and other sciences are not worth a rush, if it be not God by them that you seek after. To see and admire, to reverence and adore, to love and delight in God appearing to us in his works, and purposely to peruse them for the knowledge of God; this is the true and only philosophy, and the contrary is mere foolery, and so called again and again by God himself.—*Richard Baxter*, 1615—1691.

Verse 2.—It does not follow, that because the study of nature is now of itself an insufficient guide to the knowledge of the Creator and the enjoyment of eternal felicity, such studies are either to be thrown aside, or considered as of no importance in a religious point of view. To overlook the astonishing scene of the universe, or to view it with indifference, is virtually to "disregard the works of Jehovah, and to refuse to consider the operations of his hands." It is a violation of Christian duty, and implies a reflection on the character of the Deity, for any one to imagine that he has nothing to do with God considered as manifested in the immensity of his works; for his word is pointed and explicit in directing the mind to such contemplations. "Hearken unto this, stand still, and consider the wonderful works of God." "Lift up thine eye on high, and behold who hath created these orbs." "Remember that thou magnify his works which men behold." "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Thy saints shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power, to make known to the sons of men the mighty operations and the glorious majesty of thy kingdom."—*Thomas Dick* (1772—) *in* "*The Sidereal Heavens.*"

Verse 2.—"*Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*" This is a true characteristic of the upright and pious. The works of God are said to be "*sought out of them*," when they regard them, call them to mind, and carefully, taking them one by one, investigate them; and at the same time explain them to others, and recount them: all which is included in the verb דרשׁ; for that verb, properly is "*trivit*" [to rub, beat, or bray] hence by thrashing and grinding he has *investigated* perfectly, and has *rubbed* out the *kernel of it* for the use and profit of another: whence it is used for *concionari*, &c.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—"*Sought out,*" . . . . "*have pleasure therein.*" Philosophy seeks truth, Theology finds it, but Religion possesses it. Human things must be known to be loved, but divine things must be loved to be known.—*Blaise Pascal*, 1623—1662.

Verses 2—4.—"*Sought out.*" . . . "*The* LORD *is gracious and full of compassion.*" This is the grand discovery of all the searching, and therein lies the glory that is the conclusion of all. As in searching into any experiments in nature, there is an infinite pleasure that accompanies such a study to them that are addicted thereunto; so to him that hath pleasure in the works of God, and

is addicted to spy out his kindness in them, there is nothing so pleasant as the discovery of new circumstances of mercy that render his work "*glorious and honourable.*" Get, therefore, skill in his dealings with thee, and study thy friend's carriage to thee. It is the end why he raised thee up, and admitted thee into friendship with him, to show his art of love and friendship to thee; to show, in a word, how well he could love thee.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 3.—"*His work is honourable and glorious.*" The first thing that we notice is, that whereas the preceding verse spoke of the Lord's "*works*" in the *plural* number, this speaks of his "*work*" in the *singular* number; it would seem as if the psalmist, from the contemplation of the works of the Lord in general, was, as it were, irresistibly drawn away to the study of one work in particular; his mind and whole attention, so to speak, absorbed in that one work: a work so pre-eminently glorious and divine, that it eclipses, at least in his eyes, all the other works, although he has just said of them that they are great, and sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. "The works of the Lord are great. His work is honourable and glorious." My next remark is, that the words used in the original are different, and as the former more strictly signifies *makings*, or *things made*, so the word in this verse more properly imports a *doing* or a *thing done*, and this, perhaps, is not without its significance. It leads me to the inference, that from the contemplation of the great works of creation, God's makings, wonderful, and interesting, and useful as they are, the spiritual mind of God's servant rapidly passes to some greater deed which the Lord hath done, some more marvellous act which he has accomplished, and which he designates as an honourable and a glorious deed. Now, since I consider that he spoke before of Christ, as the visible and immediate agent in creation, without whom was not anything made that was made, can we hesitate long as to this greater work the rather as to it is immediately subjoined the suggestive sentence, "And his righteousness endureth for ever." Is not this doing, the making an end of sin, and the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness? Is it not the great mystery, in which, as in creation, though the Eternal Father is the Fountain source, the Original Contriver, He, the co-eternal Son, is the Doer, the Worker? Is it not, in short, *salvation*, the all-absorbing subject of God's people's wonder, love, and praise?—*James H. Vidal, in "Jesus, God and Man,"* 1863.

Verse 4.—"*He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.*" The *memorials* of the Divine benefits are always valued greatly by a grateful heart, as making present with us the things which transpired ages before: such under the Old Testament was the sacrament of the paschal Lamb; but now the sacred Supper under the New Testament. Therefore, whatever recalls the Divine works to the *memory*, e.g. the *ministry of the church*, also the *Sacred Scriptures*, are worthy of the highest reverence.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 4.—The sweet spices of divine works must be beaten to powder by meditation, and then laid up in the cabinet of our memories. Therefore, says the psalmist here, "*God hath made his wonderful works to be remembered*"; he gives us the jewels of deliverance, not (because of the commonness of them) to wear them on our shoes, as the Romans did their pearls; much less to tread them under our feet; but rather to tie them as a chain about our necks. The impression of God's marvellous acts upon us must not be like that which the stone makes in the water, raising circles, beating one wave on another, and for a time making a noise, but soon after it sinks down, and the water returneth to its former smoothness; and so we, while judgment is fresh, are apt to publish it from man to man, but soon after we let it sink into the depth of oblivion, and we return to our old sins.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 4.—"*Made his wonderful works to be remembered.*" The most amazing perverseness in man is proven by the fact that he does not remember what

God has so arranged that it would seem impossible that it should be forgotten. —*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 4.—

> For wonderful indeed are all his works,
> Pleasant to know and worthiest to be all
> Had in remembrance always with delight. —*John Milton.*

Verse 5.—The first hemistich is the consequence of what is stated in the second, *i.e. because* God remembered his covenant, *therefore* he gave food to them who fear him.—*George Phillips.*

Verse 5.—"*He hath given meat,*" etc. The "*meat*" here mentioned is supposed to respect the paschal lamb, when they were to remember the works of God.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 5.—"*Meat.*" Literally, *booty* or *spoil:* the *spoil* (Exod. xii. 36) brought by Israel out of Egypt, as God had engaged by "covenant" to Abraham, Gen. xv. 14, "They shall come out with great *substance*" (Kimchi). Rather the *manna* and *quails*, which to the hungry people were like a booty thrown in their way. The word is used for "*meat*" in general, in Prov. xxxi. 15; Mal. iii. 10.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 5.—"*He hath given meat.*" I rather choose to render it *portion*, in which sense it is taken in Prov. xxx. 8, and xxxi. 15; as if he should say, that God has given his people all that was needful, and that, considered as a portion, it was large and liberal; for we know that the people of Israel were enriched, not in consequence of their own industry, but by the blessing of God, who, like the father of a family, bestows upon his household everything necessary for their subsistence. In the following clause of the verse, he assigns as the reason for his care and kindness his desire of effectually demonstrating that his covenant was not null and void.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 5.—"*He will ever be mindful of his covenant.*" This clause would seem to be introduced parenthetically—a passing thought, a happy thought, presenting itself spontaneously to the psalmist's mind, and immediately expressed with his lips. It will be observed it is in the future tense, while all the other clauses are in the past—"He *hath made* his wonderful works to be remembered"; "He *hath given* meat unto them that fear him"; "He *will ever be* mindful of his covenant"; not *he hath ever been.* Dwelling on these past favours of God to Israel, it is his joy to think that they were but partial fulfilments of a covenant promise, which still remained, and in its highest sense should remain for ever; and that covenant itself the memorial or type of the better, the spiritual covenant, the gospel. So out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh, and he celebrates God's promised truth to Israel as the memorial and pledge of his eternal faithfulness to the New Testament Israel, his blood-ransomed church.—*James H. Vidal.*

Verse 6.—"*He hath shewed his people,*" etc. The Prophet indicates the unbelief of the Jews, who murmured against God in the desert, as if he could not enable them to enter into the promised land, and possess it, because the cities were walled, and the inhabitants strong, and giants dwelt in it. "*He shewed,*" he says, *i.e.*, he placed before their eyes, "*the power of His works,*" when he gave the lands of the heathen to be inhabited by his own people.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 6.—"*He hath shewed his people the power of his works.*" So he hath showed his works of power to his people in Gospel times, as the miracles of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, redemption by him, and the work of grace on the hearts of men in all ages.—*John Gill.*

Verse 6.—"*He hath shewed his people,*" etc. To them it is given to see, but not to others who are delivered up to a judicial blindness. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jer. xxxiii. 3.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 6.—"*To give them the heritage of the heathen.*" The heathen themselves are bequeathed to God's people, and they must take possession of this inheritance to draw them to themselves.—*Richter, in Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 7.—The works of God expound his word, in his works his word is often made visible. That's an excellent expression, "*The works of his hands are verity and judgment.*" *The acts of God are verity*, that is, God acts his own truths. As the works of our hands ought to be the verity and judgments of God, (every action of a Christian ought to be one of Christ's truths), so it is with God himself; the works of his hands are his own verity and judgments. When we cannot find the meaning of God in his word, we may find it in his works: his works are a comment, an infallible comment upon his word.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 7, 8.—God is known to be faithful and just both in his works and in his word, insomuch that the most beautiful harmony is apparent between the things he has spoken and those he has done. This wonderfully confirms the hope and faith of the godly.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 8.—"*They stand fast for ever and ever.*" סְמוּכִים, *semuchim*, they are *propped up, buttressed for ever.* They can never fail; for God's power supports his works, and his providence preserves the record of what he has done.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 8.—"*They stand fast,*" are established, "*for ever and ever,*" etc. This verse seems to have reference to the works of God mentioned in the former. His doings were not the demand of an occasion, they were in unison with a great and extensive purpose, with respect to the people of Israel and the Messiah. Not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law of his mouth, till all be fulfilled.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 8.—"*They are done in truth.*" It is impossible that any better way should be directed, than that which the Lord useth in the disposal of all things here below, for all the works of the Lord are done in truth. As the word of God is a word of truth, so all his works are works of truth; for his works are nothing else but the making good of his word, and they are answerable to a threefold word of his. First, to his word of *prophecy.* Whatsoever changes God makes in the world, they hit some word of prophecy. Secondly, the works of God are answerable to his word of *threatening.* God threatens before he smites, and he never smote any man with a rod or sword, but according to his threatening. Thirdly, the works of God are answerable to his word of *promise.* All mercies are promised, and every work of mercy is the fulfilling of some promise. Now seeing all the works of God are reducible, either to prophecies, threatenings, or promises; they "*are done in truth*": and what can be better done than that which is done in truth? The Jewish doctors observe, that the word *emeth* here used for truth, consists of *aleph*, the first letter of the alphabet, *mem*, the middle letter thereof, and *tau*, the last; to shew, that as God is *alpha* and *omega*, so the truth of God is the all in all of our comfort. Grace and truth by Christ is the sum of all the good news in the world.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 8.—"*Are done.*" Verses 7 and 8 contain a precious meaning for the soul whose rest is in the finished work of Christ. Jehovah has commanded, giving it in trust to Jesus to make sure, in perfect obedience, the word of truth and holiness. The commandment therefore has been "*done.*" It has been done "*in truth and uprightness*" by him whose meat it was to do it; who willingly received it with a knowledge of its end, and in whose accomplishment of it the believing sinner finds his assurance of eternal peace. John xii. 50. Jesus held the law within his heart, to keep it there for ever. As the fulfiller in truth of the commandment, he has become its end for righteousness to every believer in his name.—*Arthur Pridham.*

Verse 9.—"*He sent redemption to his people.*" Once out of Egypt, ever out of Satan's thraldom.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 9.—"*Sent redemption*" . . . . "*commanded his covenant.*" The deliverance was the more thankworthy, as being upon a covenant account: for thus every mercy is a token of the Lord's favour to his favourite: it is this which makes common mercies to become special mercies. Carnal men, so that they enjoy mercies, they mind not which way they come in, so as they can but have them; but a child of God knows that everything that comes through the Redeemer's hands and by his covenant is the better for it, and tastes the sweeter by far.—*William Cooper, in the Morning Exercises.*

Verse 9.—"*Redemption.*" Praise our Triune Jehovah for his redemption. Write it down where you may read it. Affix it where you may see it. Engrave it on your heart that you may understand it. It is a word big with importance. In it is enfolded *your* destinies and those of the Church, to all future ages. There are heights in it you never can have scaled, and depths you never can have fathomed. You have never taken the wings of the morning, and gained the utmost parts of earth, to measure the length and breadth of it. Wear it as a seal on your arm, as a signet on your right hand, for Jesus is the author of it. O! prize it as a precious stone, more precious than rubies. . . . Let it express your best hopes while living, and dwell on your trembling lips in the moment of dissolution; for it shall form the chorus of the song of the redeemed throughout eternity.—*Isaac Saunders*, 1818.

Verse 9.—"*He hath commanded his covenant for ever.*" As he covenanted, so he looketh that his covenants should be respected, which are as binding to us, as his covenant is to him; and, through grace, his covenant is as binding to him, as those are to us.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 9.—"*Holy and reverend*, or, *terrible, is his name.*" "Holy is his name," and therefore "*terrible*" to those who, under all the means of grace, continue unholy.—*George Horne.*

Verse 9.—"*Holy and reverend is his name.*" Which therefore we should not presume on a sudden to blurt out. The Jews would not pronounce it. The Grecians (as Suidas observeth), when they would swear by their Jupiter, forbare to mention him. This should act as a check to the profaneness common amongst us. Let those that would have their *name reverend*, labour to be *holy* as God is holy.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—In this passage "*fear*" is not to be understood as referring to the first or elementary principles of piety, as in 1 John iv. 18, but is comprehensive of all true godliness, or the worship of God.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 10.—"*The fear of the* LORD *is the beginning of wisdom,*" etc. The text shows us the first step to true wisdom, and the test of common sense. It is so frequently repeated, that it may pass for a Scripture maxim, and we may be sure it is of singular importance. Job starts the question, "Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" He searches nature through, in quest of it, but cannot find it: he cannot purchase it with the gold of Ophir, and its price is above rubies. At length he recollects the primitive instruction of God to man, and there he finds it: "To man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."—Job xxviii. 28. Solomon, the wisest of men, begins his Proverbs with this maxim, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge," Prov. i. 7. And he repeats it again: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy," (the knowledge of those that may be called *saints* with a sneer), "is understanding," Prov. ix. 10. "*The fear of the* LORD" in Scripture signifies not only that pious passion or filial reverence of our adorable Father who is in heaven, but it is frequently put for the whole of practical religion; hence it is explained in the last part of the verse by "*doing his commandments.*" The fear of the Lord, in this latitude, implies all the graces and all the virtues of Christianity; in short, all

that holiness of heart and life which is necessary to the enjoyment of everlasting happiness. So that the sense of the text is this: To practise religion and virtue, to take that way which leads to everlasting happiness, is *wisdom*, true wisdom, the *beginning* of wisdom, the first step towards it: unless you begin here you can never attain it; all your wisdom without this does not deserve the name; it is madness and nonsense. "*To do his commandments*" is the best test of a "*good understanding*": a "*good*" sound "*understanding*" have "*all they*" that do this, "*all*" of them without exception: however weak some of them may be in other things, they are wise in the most important respect; but without this, however cunning they are in other things, they have lost their understandings; they contradict common sense; they are beside themselves. In short, to pursue everlasting happiness as the end, in the way of holiness as the mean, this is "*wisdom*," this is common sense, and there can be none without this.—*Samuel Davies, A.M.* (1724—1761), *President of Princeton College, New Jersey.*

Verse 10.—"*The fear of the* LORD *is the beginning of wisdom.*" Now, then, I demand of the worldling what is the most high and deep point of wisdom? Is it to get an opulent fortune, to be *so wise as fifty thousand pounds?* Behold, "godliness is great gain," saith Paul, and the Christian only rich, quoth the renowned catechist [Clement] of Alexandria. Is it to live joyfully, (or to use the gallant's phrase) jovially? Behold, there is joyful gladness for such as are true hearted, Ps. xcvii. 11. A wicked man in his mad-merry humour for a while may be *Pomponius Lætus*, but a good man only is *Hilarius;* only he which is faithful in heart is joyful in heart. Is it to get honour? *the praise of God's fear* (saith our text) *endures for ever.* Many worthies of the world are most unhappy, because they be commended where they be not, and tormented where they be; hell rings of their pains, earth of their praise; but "blessed is the man that feareth the Lord" (Ps. cxii. 1), for his commendation is both here lasting, and hereafter everlasting; in this world he is renowned among men, in the next he shall be rewarded amongst saints and angels in the kingdom of glory.—*John Boys.*

Verse 10.—"*The fear of the* LORD *is the beginning of wisdom.*" It is not only the beginning of wisdom, but the middle and the end. It is indeed the Alpha and Omega, the essence, the body and the soul, the sum and substance. He that hath the fear of God is truly wise. . . . It is surely wisdom to love that which is most lovable, and to occupy our hearts with that which is most worthy of our attachment, and the most capable of satisfying us.—*From the French of Daniel de Superville*, 1700.

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—Fear is not all then; no, for it is but the beginning. God will have us begin, but not end there. We have begun with *qui timet Eum*, "who fears him;" we must end with *et operatur justitiam*, "and does justice," and then comes *acceptus est Illi*, and not before. For neither fear, if it be fear alone; nor faith, if it be faith alone, is accepted of Him. If it be true fear, if such as God will accept, it is not *timor piger*, "a dull lazy fear"; his fear that feared his lord and "went and digged his talent into the ground," and did nothing with it. Away with his fear and him "into outer darkness."—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 10.—Can it then be said that the non-religious world is without wisdom? Has it no Aristotle, no Socrates, no Tacitus, no Goethe, no Gibbon? Let us understand what wisdom is. It is not any mere amount of knowledge that constitutes wisdom. Appropriate knowledge is essential to wisdom. A man who has not the knowledge appropriate to his position, who does not know himself in his relation to God and to his fellow-men, who is misinformed as to his duties, his dangers, his necessities, though he may have written innumerable works of a most exalted character, yet is he to be set down as a man without wisdom. What is it to you that your servant is acquainted with mathematics, if he is ignorant of your will, and of the way to do it? The genius of a Voltaire, a Spinoza, a Byron, only makes their folly the more

striking. As though a man floating rapidly onwards to the falls of Niagara, should occupy himself in drawing a very admirable picture of the scenery. Men who are exceedingly great in the world's estimation have made the most signal blunders with regard to the most important things; and it is only because these things are not considered important by the world, that the reputation of these men remains.

If you have learned to estimate things in some measure as God estimates them, to desire what he offers, to relinquish what he forbids, and to recognize the duties that he has appointed you, you are in the path of wisdom, and the great men we have been speaking about are far behind you—far from the narrow gate which you have entered. He only is wise, who can call Christ the wisdom of God.—*George Bowen.*

Verse 10.—"*The beginning of wisdom.*" That is, the principle whence it springs, and the fountain from which it flows.—*William Walford.*

Verse 10.—As there are degrees of wisdom, so of the fear of the Lord; but there is no degree of this fear so inferior or low, but it is a beginning, at least, of wisdom; and there is no degree of wisdom so high or perfect, but it hath its root in, or beginning, from this fear.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—"*Beginning of wisdom.*" The word translated *beginning* is of uncertain sense. It may signify the *first* in *time* only, and so the rudiments, first foundation, or groundwork, and so though the most necessary, yet the most imperfect part of the work. And if it should thus be understood here and in other places, the sense would be no more but this, that there were no true *wisdom*, which had not its foundation in piety and fear of God. But the word signifies the *first* in *dignity* as well as in order or time, and is frequently used for the chief or principal of any kind. . . . And thus it is to be understood here, that "*the fear of the Lord*" (which signifies all piety) *is the principal or chief of wisdom*, as *sapientia prima* in Horace is the *principal* or most excellent wisdom; according to that of Job xxviii. 28: "Unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding," *that*, by way of eminence, the most excellent *wisdom* and understanding.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 10.—"*A good understanding have all they that do his commandments.*" They which *do* the commandments have a good understanding; not they which speak of the commandments, nor they which write of the commandments, nor they which preach of the commandments, but they which do the commandments, have a good understanding. The rest have a false understanding, a vain understanding, an understanding like that of the scribes and pharisees, which was enough to condemn them, but not to save them.—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 10.—"*A good understanding have all they that do,*" etc. So much a man knoweth in true account, as he doth; hence understanding is here ascribed to the will; so Job xxviii. 28. Some render it *good success.*—*John Trapp.*

Verse 10 (*last clause*).—"*The praise of it endures for ever*"; or as other translations, "*his praise*"; referring it either to God, or else to the man who fears God. Some divines ascribe this praise to God alone, because *tehilla* properly signifieth only that kind of praise which is due to God; and so they make this clause to contain both a precept and a promise. *Precept*, exhorting us to praise God with all our heart, both in the secret assemblies of the faithful and in the public congregation. And lest any man in executing this office should be discouraged, the prophet addeth a promise, "God's praise doth endure for ever"; as if he should have said, "The Lord is King, be the people never so impatient; the Lord is God, albeit the Gentiles furiously rage together, and the Jews imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers combine themselves against him," Ps. xcix. 1; xviii. 31; ii. 1. He that dwelleth in heaven hath all his enemies in derision, and makes them all his footstool; his power is for ever, and so consequently his praise shall endure for ever; in the militant church, unto the world's end; in the triumphant, world without end.

Most interpreters have referred this unto the good man who fears the Lord, yet diversely. S. Augustine expoundeth it thus, "*his praise*," that is, his praising of the Lord, "*shall endure for ever*," because he shall be one of them of whom it is said (Ps. lxxxiv. 4) "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee." Others understand by "*his praise*" the commendation of the good man, both in the life present and in that which is to come, for his righteousness shall be had in an everlasting remembrance. Ps. cxii. 6.—*John Boys.*

Verse 10 (*second clause*).—Where the fear of the Lord rules in the heart, there will be a constant conscientious care to keep his commandments: not to talk them, but to do them; and such "*have a good understanding*," *i.e.*, First, They are well understood, their obedience is graciously accepted as a plain indication of their mind, that they do indeed fear God. Secondly, They understand well. 1. It is a sign they do understand well: the most obedient are accepted as the most intelligent. They are wise that make God's law their rule, and are in everything ruled by it. 2. It is the way to understand better. "A good understanding are they to all that do them"; *i.e.*, the fear of the Lord, and the laws of God give men a good understanding, and are able to make them wise unto salvation.—*Condensed from Matthew Henry.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—"*Praise ye the Lord*"; there is an exhortation. "*I will praise the Lord*;" there is a vow. It shall be "*with my whole heart*"; there is experimental godliness. It shall be "*in the assembly of the upright*"; there is a relative position occupied along with the family of God.—*Joseph Irons.*

Verse 1.—"*With my whole heart.*" This includes spirituality, simplicity, and earnestness.—*Joseph Irons.*

Verse 1.—I. Who are the upright? II. What are they doing? Praising God. III. What shall I do if I am favoured to stand among them? "I will praise the Lord."

Verse 1.—Where I love to be, and what I love to do.

Verse 2.—The Christian philosopher. I. His sphere: "The works of the Lord." II. His work: "Sought out." III. His qualification: "Pleasure therein." IV. His conclusion: "Praise," as in verse 1.

Verses 2—9.—The psalmist furnishes us with matter for praise from the works of God. 1. The greatness of his works and the glory of them. 2. The righteousness of them. 3. The goodness of them. 4. The power of them. 5. The conformity of them to his word of promise. 6. The perpetuity of them. —*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—As an essential attribute, as revealed in providence, as vindicated in redemption, as demonstrated in punishment, as appropriated by believers.

Verse 4.—The compassion of the Lord as seen in aiding the memories of his people.

Verses 4, 5.—God's marvels ought not to be nine-day wonders. I. *It is God's design that his wonders should be remembered*, therefore, 1. He made them great. 2. He wrought them for an undeserving people. 3. He wrought them at memorable times. 4. He put them on record. 5. He instituted memorials. 6. He bade them tell their children. 7. He so dealt with them as to refresh their memories. II. *It is our wisdom to remember the Lord's wonders.* 1. To assure us of his compassion: "The Lord is gracious." 2. To make us consider his bounty: "he hath given meat." 3. To certify us of his

faithfulness : "he will ever be mindful of his covenant." 4. To arouse our praise : "Praise ye the Lord."

Verse 5.—There is, I. Encouragement from the past : "He hath given meat," etc. II. Confidence for the future : "He will ever be mindful," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 6.—The power of God an encouragement for the evangelization of the heathen.

Verse 9.—*Redemption.* Conceived, arranged, executed, and applied by God. By price and by power. From sin and death. That we may be free, the Lord's own, the Lord's glory.

Verse 9.—Redemption. I. Its author : "He sent." II. Its objects : "Unto his people." III. The pledge it gives us : "He hath commanded his covenant," etc. IV. The praise it creates in us.

Verse 9.—"*Holy and reverend.*" I. The holiness of God the object of our reverence. II. Such reverence has much useful influence over us. III. It should always accompany our faith in redemption and covenant. See preceding clauses of verse.

Verse 10.—I. The beginner in Christ's school. II. The man who has taken a degree : "a good understanding," etc. III. The Master who receives the praise.

Verse 10.—I. The beginning of wisdom : "The fear of the Lord"—God is feared. II. Its continuance : "a good understanding have all they that do his commandments"—when the fear of the Lord in the heart is developed in the life. III. Its end, praising God for ever : "his praise," etc.—*G. R.*

WORKS UPON THE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH PSALM.

In the Works of John Boys, 1626, folio, pp. 841—845, there is a short exposition of this psalm.

Jesus God and Man ; an Exposition of Psalms cxi. and cxii. By the Rev. James H. Vidal, M.A., Vicar of Chiddingley, Sussex. London : 1863 [12mo].

PSALM CXII.

TITLE AND SUBJECT.—*There is no title to this psalm, but it is evidently a companion to the hundred and eleventh, and, like it, it is an alphabetical psalm. Even in the number of verses, and clauses of each verse, it coincides with its predecessor, as also in many of its words and phrases. The reader should carefully compare the two psalms line by line. The subject of the poem before us is*—the blessedness of the righteous man, *and so it bears the same relation to the preceding which the moon does to the sun; for, while the first declares the glory of God, the second speaks of the reflection of the divine brightness in men born from above. God is here praised for the manifestation of his glory which is seen in his people, just as in the preceding psalm he was magnified for his own personal acts. The hundred and eleventh speaks of the great Father, and this describes his children renewed after his image. The psalm cannot be viewed as the extolling of man, for it commences with "Praise ye the Lord;" and it is intended to give to God all the honour of his grace which is manifested in the sons of God.*

DIVISION.—*The subject is stated in the first verse, and enlarged upon under several heads from* 2 *to* 9. *The blessedness of the righteousness is set forth by contrast with the fate of the ungodly in verse* 10.

EXPOSITION.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.

1. "*Praise ye the* LORD." This exhortation is never given too often; the Lord always deserves praise, we ought always to render it, we are frequently forgetful of it, and it is always well to be stirred up to it. The exhortation is addressed to all thoughtful persons who observe the way and manner of life of men that fear the Lord. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, the Lord should have all the glory of it, for we are his workmanship. "*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.*" According to the last verse of Psalm cxi., "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; this man, therefore, has begun to be wise, and wisdom has brought him present happiness, and secured him eternal felicity. Jehovah is so great that he is to be feared and had in reverence of all them that are round about him, and he is at the same time so infinitely good that the fear is sweetened into filial love, and becomes a delightful emotion, by no means engendering bondage. There is a slavish fear which is accursed; but that godly fear which leads to delight in the service of God is infinitely blessed. Jehovah is to be praised both for inspiring men with godly fear and for the blessedness which they enjoy in consequence thereof. We ought to bless God for blessing any man, and especially for setting the seal of his approbation upon the godly. His favour towards the God-fearing displays his character and encourages gracious feelings in others, therefore let him be praised. "*That delighteth greatly in his commandments.*" The man not only studies the divine precepts and endeavours to observe them, but rejoices to do so: holiness is his happiness, devotion is his delight, truth is his treasure. He rejoices in the precepts of godliness, yea, and delights *greatly* in them. We have known hypocrites rejoice in the doctrines, but never in the commandments. Ungodly men may in some measure obey the commandments out of fear, but only a gracious man will observe them with delight. Cheerful obedience is the only acceptable obedience; he who obeys reluctantly is disobedient at heart, but he who takes pleasure in the command is truly loyal. If through divine grace we find ourselves described in these two sentences, let us give all the praise to God, for he hath wrought all our works in us, and the dispositions out of which they spring. Let self-righteous men praise themselves, but he who has been made righteous by grace renders all the praise to the Lord.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: *he is* gracious and full of compassion, and righteous.

5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

8 His heart *is* established, he shall not be afraid, until he see *his desire* upon his enemies.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

2. "*His seed shall be mighty upon earth*," that is to say, successive generations of God-fearing men shall be strong and influential in society, and in the latter days they shall have dominion. The true seed of the righteous are those who follow them in their virtues, even as believers are the seed of Abraham, because they imitate his faith; and these are the real heroes of their era, the truly great men among the sons of Adam; their lives are sublime, and their power upon their age is far greater than at first sight appears. If the promise must be regarded as alluding to natural seed, it must be understood as a general statement rather than a promise made to every individual, for the children of the godly are not all prosperous, nor all famous. Nevertheless, he who fears God, and leads a holy life, is, as a rule, doing the best he can for the future advancement of his house; no inheritance is equal to that of an unblemished name, no legacy can excel the benediction of a saint; and, taking matters for all in all, the children of the righteous man commence life with greater advantages than others, and are more likely to succeed in it, in the best and highest sense. "*The generation of the upright shall be blessed.*" The race of sincere, devout, righteous men, is kept up from age to age, and ever abides under the blessing of God. The godly may be persecuted, but they shall not be forsaken: the curses of men cannot deprive them of the blessing of God, for the words of Balaam are true, "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." Their children also are under the special care of heaven, and as a rule it shall be found that they inherit the divine blessing. Honesty and integrity are better corner-stones for an honourable house than mere cunning and avarice, or even talent and push. To fear God and to walk uprightly is a higher nobility than blood or birth can bestow.

3. "*Wealth and riches shall be in his house.*" Understood literally this is rather a promise of the old covenant than of the new, for many of the best of the people of God are very poor; yet it has been found true that uprightness is the road to success, and, all other things being equal, the honest man is the rising man. Many are kept poor through knavery and profligacy; but godliness hath the promise of the life that now is. If we understand the passage spiritually it is abundantly true. What wealth can equal that of the love of God? What riches can rival a contented heart? It matters nothing that the roof is thatched, and the floor is of cold stone: the heart which is cheered with the favour of heaven is "rich to all the intents of bliss." "*And his righteousness endureth for ever.*" Often when gold comes in the gospel goes out; but it is not so with the blessed man. Prosperity does not destroy the holiness of his life, or

the humility of his heart. His character stands the test of examination, overcomes the temptations of wealth, survives the assaults of slander, outlives the afflictions of time, and endures the trial of the last great day. The righteousness of a true saint endureth for ever, because it springs from the same root as the righteousness of God, and is, indeed, the reflection of it. So long as the Lord abideth righteous he will maintain by his grace the righteousness of his people. They shall hold on their way, and wax stronger and stronger. There is also another righteousness which belongs to the Lord's chosen, which is sure to endure for ever, namely, the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus, which is called "everlasting righteousness," belonging as it does to the Son of God himself, who is "the Lord our righteousness."

4. "*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.*" He does not lean to injustice in order to ease himself, but like a pillar stands erect, and he shall be found so standing when the ungodly, who are as a bowing wall and a tottering fence, shall lie in ruins. He will have his days of darkness, he may be sick and sorry, poor and pining, as well as others; his former riches may take to themselves wings and fly away, while even his righteousness may be cruelly suspected; thus the clouds may lower around him, but his gloom shall not last for ever, the Lord will bring him light in due season, for as surely as a good man's sun goes down it shall rise again. If the darkness be caused by depression of spirit, the Holy Ghost will comfort him; if by pecuniary loss or personal bereavement, the presence of Christ shall be his solace; and if by the cruelty and malignity of men, the sympathy of his Lord shall be his support. It is as ordinary for the righteous to be comforted as for the day to dawn. Wait for the light and it will surely come; for even if our heavenly Father should in our last hours put us to bed in the dark, we shall find it morning when we awake. "*He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.*" This is spoken of God in the fourth verse of the hundred and eleventh Psalm, and now the same words are used of his servant: thus we are taught that when God makes a man upright, he makes him like himself. We are at best but humble copies of the great original; still we are copies, and because we are so we praise the Lord, who hath created us anew in Christ Jesus. The upright man is "gracious," that is, full of kindness to all around him; he is not sour and churlish, but he is courteous to friends, kind to the needy, forgiving to the erring, and earnest for the good of all. He is also "full of compassion"; that is to say, he tenderly feels for others, pities them, and as far as he can assists them in their time of trouble. He does not need to be driven to benevolence, he is brimful of humanity; it is his joy to sympathize with the sorrowing. He is also said to be "righteous": in all his transactions with his fellow men he obeys the dictates of right, and none can say that he goes beyond or defrauds his neighbour. His justice is, however, tempered with compassion, and seasoned with graciousness. Such men are to be found in our churches, and they are by no means so rare as the censorious imagine; but at the same time they are far scarcer than the breadth of profession might lead us to hope. Lord, make us all to possess these admirable qualities.

5. "*A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth.*" Having passed beyond stern integrity into open-handed benevolence he looks kindly upon all around him, and finding himself in circumstances which enable him to spare a little of his wealth he lends judiciously where a loan will be of permanent service. Providence has made him able to lend, and grace makes him willing to lend. He is not a borrower, for God has lifted him above that necessity; neither is he a hoarder, for his new nature saves him from that temptation; but he wisely uses the talents committed to him. "*He will guide his affairs with discretion.*" Those who neglect their worldly business must not plead religion as an excuse, for when a man is truly upright he exercises great care in managing his accounts, in order that he may remain so. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between indiscretion and dishonesty; carelessness in business may become almost as great an evil to others as actual knavery; a good man should not only *be* upright, but he should

be so discreet that no one may have the slightest reason to suspect him of being otherwise. When the righteous man lends he exercises prudence, not risking his all, for fear he should not be able to lend again, and not lending so very little that the loan is of no service. He drives his affairs, and does not allow them to drive him; his accounts are straight and clear, his plans are wisely laid, and his modes of operation carefully selected. He is prudent, thrifty, economical, sensible, judicious, discreet. Men call him a fool for his religion, but they do not find him so when they come to deal with him. "The beginning of wisdom" has made him wise, the guidance of heaven has taught him to guide his affairs, and with half an eye one can see that he is a man of sound sense. Such persons greatly commend godliness. Alas, some professedly good men act as if they had taken leave of their senses; this is not religion, but stupidity. True religion is sanctified common sense. Attention to the things of heaven does not necessitate the neglect of the affairs of earth; on the contrary, he who has learned how to transact business with God ought to be best able to do business with men. The children of this world often are in their generation wiser than the children of light, but there is no reason why this proverb should continue to be true.

6. "*Surely he shall not be moved for ever.*" God has rooted and established him so that neither men nor devils shall sweep him from his place. His prosperity shall be permanent, and not like that of the gambler and the cheat, whose gains are evanescent: his reputation shall be bright and lustrous from year to year, for it is not a mere pretence; his home shall be permanent, and he shall not need to wander from place to place as a bird that wanders from her nest: and even his memory shall be abiding, for a good man is not soon forgotten, and "*the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*" They are of a most ancient family, and not mushrooms of an hour, and their grand old stock shall be found flourishing when all the proud houses of ungodly men shall have faded into nothing. The righteous are worth remembering, their actions are of the kind which record themselves, and God himself takes charge of their memorials. None of us likes the idea of being forgotten, and yet the only way to avoid it is to be righteous before God.

7. "*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.*" He shall have no dread that evil tidings will come, and he shall not be alarmed when they do come. Rumours and reports he despises; prophecies of evil, vented by fanatical mouths, he ridicules; actual and verified information of loss and distress he bears with equanimity, resigning everything into the hands of God. "*His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*" He is neither fickle nor cowardly; when he is undecided as to his course he is still fixed in heart: he may change his plan, but not the purpose of his soul. His heart being fixed in solid reliance upon God, a change in his circumstances but slightly affects him; faith has made him firm and steadfast, and therefore if the worst should come to the worst, he would remain quiet and patient, waiting for the salvation of God.

8. "*His heart is established.*" His love to God is deep and true, his confidence in God is firm and unmoved; his courage has a firm foundation, and is supported by Omnipotence. He has become settled by experience, and confirmed by years. He is not a rolling stone, but a pillar in the house of the Lord. "*He shall not be afraid.*" He is ready to face any adversary—a holy heart gives a brave face. "*Until he see his desire upon his enemies.*" All through the conflict, even till he seizes the victory, he is devoid of fear. When the battle wavers, and the result seems doubtful, he nevertheless believes in God, and is a stranger to dismay. Grace makes him desire his enemies' good: though nature leads him to wish to see justice done to his cause, he does not desire for those who injure him anything by way of private revenge.

9. "*He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor.*" What he received, he distributed; and distributed to those who most needed it. He was God's reservoir, and forth from his abundance flowed streams of liberality to supply the needy. If this be one of the marks of a man who feareth the Lord, there

are some who are strangely destitute of it. They are great at gathering, but very slow at dispersing; they enjoy the blessedness of receiving, but seldom taste the greater joy of giving. "It is more blessed to give than to receive"—perhaps they think that the blessing of receiving is enough for them. "*His righteousness endureth for ever.*" His liberality has salted his righteousness, proved its reality, and secured its perpetuity. This is the second time that we have this remarkable sentence applied to the godly man, and it must be understood as resulting from the enduring mercy of the Lord. The character of a righteous man is not spasmodic, he is not generous by fits and starts, nor upright in a few points only; his life is the result of principle, his actions flow from settled, sure, and fixed convictions, and therefore his integrity is maintained when others fail. He is not turned about by companions, nor affected by the customs of society; he is resolute, determined, and immovable. "*His horn shall be exalted with honour.*" God shall honour him, the universe of holy beings shall honour him, and even the wicked shall feel an unconscious reverence of him. Let it be observed, in summing up the qualities of the God-fearing man, that he is described not merely as righteous, but as one bearing the character to which Paul refers in the memorable verse, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for *a good man* some would even dare to die." Kindness, benevolence, and generosity, are essential to the perfect character; to be strictly just is not enough, for God is love, and we must love our neighbour as ourselves: to give every one his due is not sufficient, we must act upon those same principles of grace which reign in the heart of God. The promises of establishment and prosperity are not to churlish Nabals, nor to niggard Labans, but to bountiful souls who have proved their fitness to be stewards of the Lord by the right way in which they use their substance.

10 The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

The tenth and last verse sets forth very forcibly the contrast between the righteous and the ungodly, thus making the blessedness of the godly appear all the more remarkable. Usually we see Ebal and Gerizim, the blessing and the curse, set the one over against the other, to invest both with the greater solemnity. "*The wicked shall see it, and be grieved.*" The ungodly shall first see the example of the saints to their own condemnation, and shall at last behold the happiness of the godly and to the increase of their eternal misery. The child of wrath shall be obliged to witness the blessedness of the righteous, though the sight shall make him gnaw his own heart. He shall fret and fume, lament and wax angry, but he shall not be able to prevent it, for God's blessing is sure and effectual. "*He shall gnash with his teeth.*" Being very wrathful, and exceedingly envious, he would fain grind the righteous between his teeth; but as he cannot do that, he grinds his teeth against each other. "*And melt away.*" The heat of his passion shall melt him like wax, and the sun of God's providence shall dissolve him like snow, and at the last the fire of divine vengeance shall consume him as the fat of rams. How horrible must that life be which like the snail melts as it proceeds, leaving a slimy trail behind. Those who are grieved at goodness deserve to be worn away by such an abominable sorrow. "*The desire of the wicked shall perish.*" He shall not achieve his purpose, he shall die a disappointed man. By wickedness he hoped to accomplish his purpose—that very wickedness shall be his defeat. While the righteous shall endure for ever, and their memory shall be always green; the ungodly man and his name shall rot from off the face of the earth. He desired to be the founder of a family, and to be remembered as some great one: he shall pass away and his name shall die with him. How wide is the gulf which separates the righteous from the wicked, and how different are the portions which the Lord deals out to them. O for grace to be blessed of the Lord! This will make us praise him with our whole heart.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm—The hundred and eleventh and the hundred and twelfth psalms, two very short poems, dating apparently from the latest age of inspired psalmody, present such features of resemblance as to leave no doubt that they came from the same pen. In structure they are identical; and this superficial resemblance is designed to call attention to something deeper and more important. The subject of the one is the exact counterpart of the subject of the other. The first celebrates the character and works of *God;* the second, the character and felicity of *the godly man.*—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—Here are rehearsed the blessings which God is wont to bestow on the godly. And as in the previous Psalm the praises of God were directly celebrated, so in this Psalm they are indirectly declared by those gifts which are conspicuous in those who fear him.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Whole Psalm.—This psalm is a banquet of heavenly wisdom; and as Basil speaketh of another part of Scripture, likening it to an apothecary's shop; so may this book of the psalms fitly be compared; in which are so many sundry sorts of medicines, that every man may have that which is convenient for his disease.—*T. S.*, 1621.

Whole Psalm.—The righteousness of the Mediator, I make no doubt, is celebrated in this psalm; for surely that alone is worthy to be extolled in songs of praise: especially since we are taught by the Holy Ghost to say, "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." I conclude, therefore, that in this alphabetical psalm, for such is its construction, Christ is "the Alpha and the Omega."—*John Fry.*

Verse 1.—This psalm is a praising of God for blessing the believer, and the whole Psalm doth prove that the believer is blessed: which proposition is set down in verse 1, and confirmed with as many reasons as there are verses following. Whence learn, 1. Albeit, in singing of certain psalms, or parts thereof, there be nothing directly spoken of the Lord, or to the Lord, yet he is praised when his truth is our song, or when his works and doctrine are our song; as here it is said, "*Praise ye the Lord,*" and then in the following verses the blessedness of the believer taketh up all the psalm. 2. It is the Lord's praise that his servants are the only blessed people in the world. "*Praise ye the Lord.*" Why? because "*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.*" 3. He is not the blessed man who is most observant to catch opportunities to have pleasure, profit, and worldly preferment, and careth not how he cometh by them: but he is the blessed man who is most observant of God's will, and careful to follow it.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.*" It is not said simply, *Blessed is the man who fears:* for there is a fear which of itself produces misery and wretchedness rather than happiness. It has to do, therefore, chiefly with what is feared. To fear when it is not becoming, and not to fear when fear is proper, these are not blessedness for a man, but misery and wretchedness. The prophet, therefore, says rightly, "Blessed is the man that feareth *the Lord*": and in the 7th and 8th verses he says of this blessed one that he shall not be afraid of evil tidings. Therefore, he who fears God and, according to the exhortation of Christ, does not fear those who can kill the body, he truly may be numbered among the blessed.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 1.—"*Feareth the Lord.*" Filial fear is here intended. Whereby we are both restrained from evil, Prov. iii. 7; and incited unto well doing, Eccles. xii. 13; and whereof God alone is the author, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40; A duty required of every one, Ps. xxxiii. 8; Early, 1 Kings xviii. 12; Only, Luke xii. 5. Continually, Prov. xxiii. 17; With confidence, Ps. cxv. 11; With joyfulness, Ps. cxix. 74; With thankfulness, Rev. xix. 5.—*Thomas Wilson, in "A Complete Christian Dictionary,"* 1661.

Verse 1.—"*That delighteth greatly in his commandments.*" The Hebrew word חָפֵץ, *chaphets*, is rather emphatical, which is, as it were, to *take his pleasure*, and I have rendered it *to delight himself*. For the prophet makes a distinction between a willing and prompt endeavour to keep the law, and that which consists in mere servile and constrained obedience.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 1.—"*That delighteth greatly in his commandments*"—defining what constitutes the true "fear of the Lord," which was termed "the beginning of wisdom," Ps. cxi. 10. He who hath this true "fear" *delights* (Ps. cxi. 2) not merely in the theory, but in the practice of all "the Lord's commandments." Such fear, so far from being a "hard" service, is the only "blessed" one (Jer. xxxii. 39). Compare the Gospel commandments, 1 John iii., 23, 24: v. 3. True obedience is not task-work, as formalists regard religion, but a "delight" (Ps. i. 2). Worldly delights, which made piety irksome, are supplanted by the new-born delight in and taste for the will and ways of God (Ps. xix. 7–10).—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 1.—"*In his commandments.*" When we cheerfully practice all that the Lord requireth of us, love sweeteneth all things, and it becomes our meat and drink to do his will. The thing commanded is excellent, but it is sweeter because commanded *by him*—"*his* commandments." A man is never thoroughly converted till he delighteth in God and his service, and his heart is overpowered by the sweetness of divine love. A slavish kind of religiousness, when we had rather not do than do our work, is no fruit of grace, and cannot evidence a sincere love. - *Thomas Manton.*

Verse 2.—"*His seed.*" If any one should desire to leave behind him a flourishing posterity, let him not think to accomplish it by accumulating heaps of gold and silver, and leaving them behind him; but by rightly recognising God and serving Him; and commending his children to the guardianship and protection of God.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 2.—"*The generation of the upright*"—the family; the children—"*shall be blessed.*" Such promises are expected to be fulfilled *in general;* it is not required by any proper rules of interpreting language that this should be universally and always true.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2.—"*The generation of the upright shall be blessed.*" Albeit, few do believe it, yet is it true, that upright dealing hath better fruits than witty projecting and cunning catching.—*David Dickson.*

Verses 2, 3.—It is probable that Lot thought of enriching his family when he chose the fertile plains of wicked Sodom, yet the event was very different; but Abraham "feared the Lord, and delighted greatly in his commandments," and his descendants were "*mighty upon earth.*" And thus it will generally be, in every age, with the posterity of those who imitate the father of the faithful; and their disinterested and liberal conduct shall prove, in the event, a far preferable inheritance laid up for their children, than gold and silver, houses and lands, would have been.—*Thomas Scott.*

Verse 3.—"*Wealth and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever.*" He is not the worse for his wealth, nor drawn aside by the deceitfulness of riches, which yet is hard and happy.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3.—In the lower sense, we may read these words literally of abundant wealth bestowed on the righteous by God, and used, not for pride and luxury, but for continual works of mercy, whence it is said of the person so enriched, that "*his righteousness endureth for ever.*" But the higher meaning bids us see here those true spiritual riches which are stored up for the poor in spirit, often most needy in the prosperity of the world; and we may come at the truest sense by comparing the words wherein the great apostle describes his own condition, "As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." 2 Cor. vi. 10. For who can be richer than he who is

heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ?—*Agellius, Chrysostom, and Didymus, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 3.—"*His righteousness endureth for ever.*" It seems a bold thing to say this of anything human, and yet it is true; for all human righteousness has its root in the righteousness of God. It is not merely man striving to copy God. It is God's gift and God's work. There is a living connexion between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man, and therefore the imperishableness of the one appertains to the other also. Hence the same thing is affirmed here of the human righteousness which in cxi. 3 is affirmed of the Divine.—*J. J. S. Perowne.*

Verse 3.—"*His righteousness endureth for ever.*" We are justified before God by faith only: Rom. iii. 4: but they are righteous before men, who live honestly, piously, humbly, as the law of God requires. Concerning this righteousness the Psalmist says that *it endureth for ever*, while the feigned and simulated uprightness of hypocrites is abominable before God, and with men speedily passes away.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Verse 4.—"*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.*" The arising of light out of darkness, although one of the most common, is one of the most beautiful, as it is one of the most beneficent natural phenomena. The sunrise is a daily victory of light over darkness. Every morning the darkness flees away. Heavy sleepers in the city are not apt to be very well acquainted with the rising sun. They know the tender beauties of the dawning, and the glories of sunrise by poetical description, or by the word of others. The light has fully come, and the day has long begun its work, especially if it be summer time, before ordinary citizens are awake; and, unless on some rare occasions, the millions of men who, every day, see more or less the fading of the light into the dark, never see the rising of the light out of the dark again; and, perhaps, seldom or never think with what thankfulness and joy it is hailed by those who need it—by the sailor, tempest-tossed all night, and driven too near the sand-bank or the shore: by the benighted traveller lost in the wood, or in the wild, who knows not south from north until the sun shall rise; by the night watcher in the sick room, who hears, and weeps to hear, through the weary night, the moaning of that old refrain of sorrow, "Would God it were morning!". What intensity of sorrow, fear, hope, there may be in that expression, "more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning"! Now I make no doubt that there is at least somewhat of that intenser meaning carried up into the higher region of spiritual experience, and expressed by the text, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." . . . Sincerity: an honest desire to know the truth: readiness to make any sacrifice in order to the knowledge: obedience to the truth so far as it is known already—these will bring the light *when nothing else will bring it.*—*Alexander Raleigh, in "The Little Sanctuary and other Meditations,"* 1872.

Verse 4.—"*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.*" The great lesson taught by this simile is the connection which obtains between integrity of purpose and clearness of perception, insomuch that a duteous conformity to what is right, is generally followed up by a ready and luminous discernment of what is true. It tells us that if we have but grace to *do* as we ought, we shall be made to *see* as we ought. It is a lesson repeatedly affirmed in Scripture, and that in various places both of the Old and New Testament: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"; "The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them"; "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart"; or still more specifically, "To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."—*Thomas Chalmers,* 1780—1847.

Verse 4.—"*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness*": that is, comfort in affliction. He hath comforted others in affliction, and been light to

them in their darkness, as is showed in the latter end of the fourth verse, and in the fifth, and therefore by way of gracious retaliation, the Lord will comfort him in his affliction, and command the light to rise upon him in his darkness.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4.—"*Light.*" "*Darkness.*" While we are on earth, we are subject to a threefold "*darkness*"; the darkness of error, the darkness of sorrow, and the darkness of death. To dispel these, God visiteth us, by his Word, with a threefold "light"; the light of truth, the light of comfort, and the light of life.—*George Horne.*

Verse 4. "*Gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous*"—attributes usually applied to *God*, but here said of "*the upright.*" The children of God, knowing in their own experience that God our Father is 'gracious, full of compassion, and righteous,' seek themselves to be the same towards their fellow-men from instinctive imitation of him (Matt. v. 45, 48; Eph. v. 8; Luke vi. 36).—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 5.—"*A good man sheweth favour,*" etc. Consider that power to do good is a dangerous ability, unless we use it. Remember that it is God who giveth wealth, and that he expecteth some answerable return of it. Live not in such an inhuman manner as if Nabal and Judas were come again into the world. Think frequently and warmly of the love of God and Jesus to you. You will not deny your crumbs to the miserable, when you thankfully call to mind that Christ gave for you his very flesh and blood. Consider as one great end of poverty is patience, so one great end of wealth is charity. Think how honourable it is to make a present to the great King of the world; and what a condescension it is in his all-sufficiency to do that good by us, which he could so abundantly do without us.—*Thomas Tenison*, 1636—1715.

Verse 5.—"*Lendeth.*" The original word here, לָוָה, *lavah*, means to join oneself to any one; to cleave to him; then to form the union which is constituted between debtor and creditor, borrower and lender. Here it is used in the latter sense, and it means that a good man will accommodate another—a neighbour—with money, or with articles to be used temporarily and returned again. A man who always *borrows* is not a desirable neighbour; but a man who never lends—who never is willing to accommodate—is a neighbour that no one would wish to live near—a crooked, perverse, bad man. True religion will always dispose a man to do acts of kindness in any and every way possible.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 5.—Charity though it springs in the heart should be guided by the head, that it may spread itself abroad to the best advantage. "*He will guide his affairs with discretion,*" and no affairs are so properly the good man's own as the dispensation and stewardship of those blessings which God has entrusted him with, for "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."—*Michael Cox*, 1748.

Verse 5.—"*He will guide his affairs with discretion.*" Just as a steward, servant, or agent in any secular concern has to feel that his *mind* is his master's, as well as his hands, and that his attention, thought, tact, and talent, should be vigorously and faithfully given to the interests of his employer; so the Christian stewardship of money, demands on the part of God's servant, in respect to every form of its use and disposal, the exercise of reflection; a reference to conscience; the recollection of responsibility to God; attention to the appeals of humanity as addressed to the ear of justice and love. Everything is to be weighed as in the balance of the sanctuary; a decision formed; and then energy, skill, schemes, and plans wisely constructed, prudential limitations or beneficent liberality as may seem best. Spending, saving, giving, or lending, all being done so as best to meet what may be felt to be the Master's will, and what may best evince at once the wisdom and the fidelity of his servant.—*Thomas Binney, in "Money: a Popular Exposition in Rough Notes,"* 1865.

Verse 5.—"*Discretion.*" There is a story, concerning divers ancient Fathers,

that they came to St. Anthony, enquiring of him, what virtue did by a direct line lead to perfection, that so a man might shun the snares of Satan. He bade every one of them speak his opinion ; one said, watching and sobriety ; another said, fasting and discipline ; a third said, humble prayer ; a fourth said, poverty and obedience ; and another, piety and works of mercy ; but when every one had spoken his mind, his answer was, That all these were excellent graces indeed, but discretion was the chief of them all. And so beyond doubt it is ; being the very *Auriga virtutum*, the guide of all virtuous and religious actions, the moderator and orderer of all the affections ; for whatsoever is done with it is virtue, and what without it is vice. An ounce of discretion is said to be worth a pound of learning. As zeal without knowledge is blind, so knowledge without discretion is lame, like a sword in a madman's hand, able to do much, apt to do nothing. *Tolle hanc et virtus vitium erit.* He that will fast must fast with discretion, he must so mortify that he does not kill his flesh ; he that gives alms to the poor, must do it with discretion, *Omni petenti non omnia petenti*—to every one that doth ask, but not everything that he doth ask ; so likewise pray with discretion, observing place and time ; place, lest he be reputed a hypocrite ; time, lest he be accounted a heretic. Thus it is that discretion is to be made the guide of all religious performances.—*Quoted by John Spencer*, 1658.

Verse 6.—What doth the text say? "*The righteous* (that is the bountiful) *shall be in everlasting remembrance.*" God remembers our good deeds, when he rewards them (as he does our prayers, when he hears them). If to remember, then, be to reward, an everlasting reward is our everlasting remembrance. . . . Now in those who are to be partakers of mercy, the divine wisdom requires this congruity, that they be such as have been ready to show mercy to others.—*Joseph Mede*, 1586—1638.

Verse 6.—"*The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*" The stately and durable pyramids of Egypt have not transmitted to posterity even the names of those buried in them. And what has even embalming done, but tossed them about, and exposed them to all the world as spectacles to the curious, of meanness, or horror? But the piety of Abraham, of Jacob, of David and Samuel, of Hezekiah, Josiah and others, is celebrated to this very day. So when pyramids shall sink, and seas cease to roll, when sun and moon and stars shall be no more, "*the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*"—*John Dun*, 1790.

Verse 7.—"*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.*" How can you affright him? Bring him word his estate is ruined ; 'yet my inheritance is safe,' says he. Your wife, or child, or dear friend is dead ; 'yet my Father lives.' You yourself must die; 'well, then, I go home to my Father, and to my inheritance.'

For the public troubles of the Church, doubtless it is both a most pious and generous temper, to be more deeply affected for these than for all our private ones ; and to sympathise in the common calamities of any people, but especially of God's own people, hath been the character of men near unto him. Observe the pathetical strains of the prophet's bewailing, when he foretells the desolation even of foreign kingdoms, much more of the Lord's chosen people, still mindful of Sion, and mournful of her distresses. (Jer. ix. 1, and the whole Book of Lamentations.) Yet even in this, with much compassion, there is a calm in a believer's mind; he finds amidst all hard news, yet still a fixed heart, trusting, satisfied in this, that deliverance shall come in due time, Ps. cii. 13, and that in those judgments that are inflicted, man shall be humbled and God exalted, Isaiah ii. 11, and v. 15 and 16 ; and that in all tumults and changes, and subversion of states, still the throne of God is fixed, and with that the believer's heart likewise, Ps. xciii. 2. So Ps. xxix. 10.—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 7.—"*He shall not be afraid,*" etc. If a man would lead a happy life, let him but seek a sure object for his trust, and he shall be safe : "*He shall not*

be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." A man that puts his confidence in God, if he hears bad news of mischief coming towards him, as suppose a bad debt, a loss at sea, accidents by fire, tempests, or earthquakes, as Job had his messengers of evil tidings, which came thick and threefold upon him, yet he is not afraid, for his heart is fixed on God: he hath laid up his confidence in God, therefore his heart is kept in an equal poise: he can say, as Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord," Job i. 21. His comforts did not ebb and flow with the creature, but his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 7 *(first clause).*—The good man will not be alarmed by any report of danger, whilst the dishonest man, conscious of his wickedness, is always in a state of fear.—*George Phillips.*

Verse 7.—"*His heart is fixed,*" or prepared, ready, and in arms for all services; resolved not to give back, able to meet all adventures, and stand its ground. God is unchangeable; and therefore faith is invincible, for it sets the heart on him; fastens it there on the rock of eternity; then let winds blow and storms arise, it cares not.—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 7.—"*His heart is fixed*"—established fearlessly. So Moses, with the Red Sea before and the Egyptian foes behind (Exod. xiv. 13); Jehoshaphat before the Ammonite horde of invaders (2 Chron. xx. 12, 15, 17); Asa before Zerah, the Ethiopian's "thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots" (2 Chron. xiv. 9—12). Contrast with the persecuted David's fearless trust Saul's panic-stricken feeling at the Philistine invasion, inasmuch as he repaired for help to a witch. How bold were the three youths in prospect of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace! How fearless Stephen before the council! Basilius could say, in answer to the threats of Cæsar Valens, "such bug-bears should be set before children." Athanasius said of Julian, his persecutor, "He is a mist that will soon disappear."—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 7.—"*Trusting in the Lord,*" I need not prove that a man can have no other sure comfort and support. For what can he confide in? His *treasure?* This may soon be exhausted, or it may awaken the avarice or ambition of a powerful enemy, as Hezekiah's did the king of Babylon, and so instead of being a defence, prove the occasion of his ruin. Can he confide in *power?* Alas, he knows that when this is grown too big to fall by any other hands, it generally falls by its own. Can he finally confide in worldly *wisdom?* Alas, a thousand unexpected accidents, and unobserved latent circumstances, cross and frustrate this, and render the Ahithophels not only unfortunate, but often contemptible too.—*Richard Lucas,* 1648—1715.

Verse 8.—"*His heart is established.*" Happy surely, is the man whose heart is thus established. Others may be politic, he only is wise; others may be fortunate, he only is great; others may drink deeper draughts of sensual pleasure, he only can eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. He is an image of that great Being whom he trusts . . . . and in the midst of storms, and thunders, and earthquakes sits himself serene and undisturbed, bidding the prostrate world adore the Lord of the universe.—*George Gleig,* 1803.

Verse 8.—"*Until he see his desire upon his enemies.*" His faith will not fail, nor shrink, nor change, while one by one his enemies are brought to the knowledge of the truth and the love of Christ, and he shall see his heart's desire fulfilled upon them, even that they may be saved.—*Plain Commentary.*

Verse 8.—"*Until he see his desire upon his enemies.*" Or, according to the original, *Until he looks upon his oppressors;* that is, till he behold them securely, and, as we say, confidently *looks in their faces;* as being now no longer under their power, but being freed from their tyranny and oppression.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 9.—When all the flashes of sensual pleasure are quite extinct, when

all the flowers of secular glory are withered away; when all earthly treasures are buried in darkness; when this world, and all the fashion of it, are utterly vanished and gone, the bountiful man's state will be still firm and flourishing, and "*his righteousness shall endure for ever.*" "*His horn shall be exalted with honour.*" A horn is an emblem of *power;* for it is the beast's strength, offensive and defensive: and of *plenty*, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of *sanctity*, for in it was put the holy oil, with which kings were consecrated; and of *dignity*, both in consequence upon the reasons mentioned as denoting might, and influence, and sacredness accompanying sovereign dignity; and because also it is an especial beauty and ornament to the creature which hath it; so that this expression, "*his horn shall be exalted with honour,*" may be supposed to import that an abundance of high, and holy, of firm and solid honour shall attend upon the bountiful person. . . . God will thus exalt the bountiful man's horn even here in this world, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in a future state.—*Isaac Barrow*, 1630—1677.

Verse 9.—"*For ever.*" The Hebrew phrase in this text is not לְעוֹלָם, *in seculum*, which is sometimes used of a limited eternity, but לָעַד, *in eternum*, which seems more expressive of an endless duration, and is the very same phrase whereby the duration of God's righteousness is expressed in the foregoing psalm at the third verse.—*William Berriman*, 1688—1749.

Verses 9, 10.—These words are an enlargement of the character, begun at the first verse, of the blessed man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. The author closes that character with an amiable description of his charity, and so leaves on our minds a strong impression, that benevolence of heart when displayed in the benefaction of the hand is the surest mark and fairest accomplishment of a moral and religious mind; which, whether it rewards the worthy, or relieves the unworthy object, is the noblest imitation of the dealings of God with mankind. For he rewardeth the good if any can be called so but himself, (though the name *good* is but *God* spread out). He beareth even with the wicked and stretcheth out his hand to save even them.—*Michael Cox.*

Verse 10.—"*The wicked.*" The word רָשָׁע, *the wicked*, is used emphatically, by the Jews, to denote him who neither gives to the poor himself, nor can endure to see other people give; while he who deserves but one part of this character is only said to have *an evil eye in regard of other people's substance, or in regard of his own.—Mishna.*

Verse 10.—"*The wicked shall see it and be grieved,*" *&c.*—The sight of Christ in glory with his saints, will, in an inexpressible manner torment the crucifiers of the one, and the persecutors of the other; as it will show them the hopes and wishes of their adversaries all granted to the full, and all their own "desires" and designs for ever at an end; it will excite envy which must prey upon itself, produce a grief which can admit of no comfort, give birth to a worm which can never die, and blow up those fires which nothing can quench. —*George Horne.*

Verse 10.—"*The wicked shall see it, and be grieved,*" etc. It is the property of the Devil, not to mistake the nature of virtue, and esteem it criminal, but to hate it for this reason, because it is good, and therefore most opposite to his designs. The wicked, as his proper emissaries, resemble him in this, and grieve to have the foulness of their vices made conspicuous by being placed near the light of virtuous example. . . . They may, like the giants of ancient fable, attempt a romantic war with heaven; but all their preparations for that purpose must recoil with double force upon themselves, and cover them with shame and confusion. . . . If such be the effect of their malice in the present life, that, instead of injuring those they rage against, it usually turns to their own vexation, how much more, when the scene shall open in the life to come. . . . They shall continue then to gnash their teeth (the wretched amusement of

that cursed state) as well in grief and anguish for their own torments, as in rage and envy at the abundant honour which is done the saints.—*William Berriman.*

Verse 10.—"*The wicked shall see it, and be grieved*"; that is, he shall have secret indignation in himself to see matters go so; "*he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away.*" Gnashing of teeth is caused by vexing the heart; and therefore it follows, "*he melts away*"; which notes (melting is from the heart) an extreme heat within. The sense is very suitable to that of Eliphaz (Job v. 2) "wrath slayeth the foolish," or wrath makes him melt away, it melts his grease with chafing, as we say of a man furiously vexed. Hence that deplorable condition of the damned, who are cast out of the presence of God for ever, is described by "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth"; which imports not only pain, but extreme vexing at, or in themselves. These finally impenitent ones shall be slain for ever with their own wrath, as well as with the wrath of God. –*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—"*The wicked shall see it.*" The psalm which speaks of the blessedness of the saints also bears solemn testimony to the doom of the wicked. Cowper sings as if this verse was before his eyes.

> . . . The same word, that like the polished share
> Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
> Kills, too, the flow'ry weeds where'er they grow,
> That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
> Oh that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,
> Sad messenger of mercy from above,
> How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
> Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear!
> His will and judgment at continual strife,
> That civil war embitters all his life;
> In vain he points his pow'rs against the skies,
> In vain he closes or averts his eyes:
> Truth will intrude.

Verse 10.—"*He shall gnash with his teeth.*" An enraged man snaps his teeth together, as if about to bite the object of his anger. Thus in the book *Rāmyanum*, the giant Rāvanan is described as in his fury gnashing together his "thirty-two teeth!" Of angry men it is frequently said, "Look at the beast, how he gnashes his teeth!" "*Go near that fellow!* not I, indeed! he will only gnash his teeth."—*Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 10.—"*He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away.*" The effect of envy, which consumes the envious. Thus the poet: "Envy is most hateful, but has some good in it, for it makes the eyes and the heart of the envious to pine away."—*John Le Clerc*, 1657—1736.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—"*Praise ye the* LORD." I. Who should be praised? Not man, self, wealth, etc., but God only. II. Who should praise him? All men, but specially his people, the blessed ones described in this psalm. III. Why should they do it? For all the reasons mentioned in succeeding verses. IV. How should they do it? Chiefly by leading such a life as is here described.

Verse 1 (*second clause*). -I. Fear of the Lord; what it is. II. Its connection with the delight mentioned. III. The qualities in the commandments which excite delight in godfearing minds.

Verse 2.—The real might of the holy seed and their true blessedness.

Verse 3.—The riches of a Christian: content, peace, security, power in prayer, promises, providence, yea, God himself.

Verse 3.—The enduring character of true righteousness. 1. Based on eternal principles. 2. Growing out of an incorruptible seed. 3. Sustained by a faithful God. 4. United to the everliving Christ.

Verse 3.—Connection of the two clauses—How to be wealthy and righteous. Note the following verses, and show how liberality is needful if rich men would be righteous men.

Verse 4 (*whole verse*).—I. The upright have their dark times. II. They shall receive comfort. III. Their own character will secure this.

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—I. The character of the righteous: "upright," "gracious," etc. II. His privilege. 1. Light as well as darkness. 2. More light than darkness. 3. Light in darkness: inward light in the midst of surrounding darkness. Light seen above, when all is dark below. Even darkness itself becomes the harbinger of day.—*G. R.*

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—A Trinity of excellences found in true Christians, in Christ, and in God: their union forms a perfect character when they are well balanced. Show how they are exemplified in daily life.

Verse 5.—I. A good man is benevolent, but a benevolent man is not always good. II. A good man is prudent, but a prudent man is not always a good man. There must first be goodness and then its fruits. "Make the tree good," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—"*Lending.*" I. It is to be done. II. It is to be done as a favour; borrowing is seeking alms. III. It should be done very discreetly. Add to this a homily on borrowing and repaying.

Verse 6.—I. In this life the Christian is, 1, Steadfast; 2, Calm; 3, Unconconquerable: and II. When this life is over his memory is, 1, Beloved; 2, Influential; 3, Perpetual.

Verse 6.—I. The character of the righteous is eternal: "surely," etc. II. His influence upon others is eternal: "shall be had," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 7.—1. "*He shall not be afraid,*" etc.: peaceful. 2. "*His heart is fixed*": restful. 3. "*Trusting in the Lord*": trustful; the cause of the former.

Verse 7.—I. The waves: "evil tidings." II. The steady ship: "he shall not be afraid." III. The anchor: "his heart is fixed, trusting." IV. The anchorage: "in the Lord."

Verse 8.—Heart establishment, the confidence which flows from it, the sight which shall be seen by him who possesses it.

Verse 8.—I. The security of the righteous: "his heart is established." II. His tranquillity: "he shall not be afraid;" and, III. His expectancy: "until," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 9.—Benevolence: its exercise in almsgiving, its preserving influence upon character, and the honour which it wins.

Verse 10.—I. What the wicked must see, and its effect upon them. II. What they shall never see (their desire), and the result of their disappointment.

WORK ON THE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH PSALM.

An Exposition vpon the cxii. Psalme. The high way to everlasting blessednesse. Written for the benefit of God's Church. By T. S. . . . London, . . . 1621. [8vo. This exposition is upon the first two verses of the Psalm only.]

PSALM CXIII.

TITLE AND SUBJECT.—*This Psalm is one of pure praise, and contains but little which requires exposition; a warm heart full of admiring adoration of the Most High will best of all comprehend this sacred hymn. Its subject is the greatness and condescending goodness of the God of Israel, as exhibited in lifting up the needy from their low estate. It may fitly be sung by the church during a period of revival after it has long been minished and brought low. With this Psalm begins the Hallel, or Hallelujah of the Jews, which was sung at their solemn feasts: we will therefore call it* THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE HALLEL. *Dr. Edersheim tells us that the Talmud dwells upon the peculiar suitableness of the Hallel to the Passover, "since it not only recorded the goodness of God towards Israel, but especially their deliverance from Egypt, and therefore appropriately opened with 'Praise ye Jehovah, ye servants of Jehovah,' —and no longer servants of Pharaoh." Its allusions to the poor in the dust and the needy upon the dunghill are all in keeping with Israel in Egypt, and so also is the reference to the birth of numerous children where they were least expected.*

DIVISION.—*No division need be made in the exposition of this Psalm, except it be that which is suggested by the always instructive headings supplied by the excellent authors of our common version: an exhortation to praise God, for his excellency,* 1—5; *for his mercy,* 6—9.

EXPOSITION.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.

2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name *is* to be praised.

4 The LORD *is* high above all nations, *and* his glory above the heavens.

5 Who *is* like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,

6 Who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth!

7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

8 That he may set *him* with princes, *even* with the princes of his people.

9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house, *and to be* a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

1. "*Praise ye the* LORD," or Hallelujah, praise to JAH Jehovah. Praise is an essential offering at all the solemn feasts of the people of God. Prayer is the myrrh, and praise is the frankincense, and both of these must be presented unto the Lord. How can we pray for mercy for the future if we do not bless God for his love in the past? The Lord hath wrought all good things for us, let us therefore adore him. All other praise is to be excluded, the entire devotion of the soul must be poured out unto Jehovah only. "*Praise, O ye servants of the* LORD." Ye above all men, for ye are bound to do so by your calling and profession. If God's own servants do not praise him, who will? Ye are a people near unto him, and should be heartiest in your loving gratitude. While they were slaves of Pharaoh, the Israelites uttered groans and sighs by reason of their hard bondage;

but now that they had become servants of the Lord, they were to express themselves in songs of joy. His service is perfect freedom, and those who fully enter into it discover in that service a thousand reasons for adoration. They are sure to praise God best who serve him best; indeed, service is praise. "*Praise the name of the* LORD": extol his revealed character, magnify every sacred attribute, exult in all his doings, and reverence the very name by which he is called. The name of Jehovah is thrice used in this verse, and may by us who understand the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity be regarded as a thinly-veiled allusion to that holy mystery. Let Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all be praised as the one, only, living, and true God. The close following of the words, "Hallelu-jah, Hallelu, Hallelu," must have had a fine effect in the public services. Dr. Edersheim describes the temple service as responsive, and says, "Every first line of a Psalm was repeated by the people, while to each of the others they responded by a 'Hallelu Jah' or 'Praise ye the Lord' thus—

The Levites began: '*Hallelujah*' (Praise ye the Lord).
The people repeated: '*Hallelu Jah.*'
The Levites: 'Praise (*Hallelu*), O ye servants of Jehovah.'
The people responded: '*Hallelu Jah.*'
The Levites: 'Praise (*Hallelu*) the name of Jehovah.'
The people responded: '*Hallelu Jah.*'

These were not vain repetitions, for the theme is one which we ought to dwell upon; it should be deeply impressed upon the soul, and perseveringly kept prominent in the life.

2. "*Blessed be the name of the* LORD." While praising him aloud, the people were also to *bless* him in the silence of their hearts, wishing glory to his name, success to his cause, and triumph to his truth. By mentioning *the name*, the Psalmist would teach us to bless each of the attributes of the Most High, which are as it were the letters of his name; not quarrelling with his justice or his severity, nor servilely dreading his power, but accepting him as we find him revealed in the inspired word and by his own acts, and loving him and praising him as such. We must not give the Lord a new name nor invent a new nature, for that would be the setting up of a false god. Every time we think of the God of Scripture we should bless him, and his august name should never be pronounced without joyful reverence. "*From this time forth.*" If we have never praised him before, let us begin now. As the Passover stood at the beginning of the year it was well to commence the new year with blessing him who wrought deliverance for his people. Every solemn feast had its own happy associations, and might be regarded as a fresh starting-place for adoration. Are there not reasons why the reader should make the present day the opening of a year of praise? When the Lord says, "From this time will I bless you," we ought to reply, "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth."

"*And for evermore*": eternally. The Psalmist could not have intended that the divine praise should cease at a future date however remote. "For evermore" in reference to the praise of God must signify endless duration: are we wrong in believing that it bears the same meaning when it refers to gloomier themes? Can our hearts ever cease to praise the name of the Lord? Can we imagine a period in which the praises of Israel shall no more surround the throne of the Divine Majesty? Impossible. For ever, and more than "for ever," if more can be, let him be magnified.

3. "*From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the* LORD'S *name is to be praised.*" From early morn till eve the ceaseless hymn should rise unto Jehovah's throne, and from east to west over the whole round earth pure worship should be rendered unto his glory. So ought it to be; and blessed be God, we are not without faith that so it shall be. We trust that ere the world's dread evening comes, the glorious name of the Lord will be proclaimed among all nations, and all people shall call him blessed. At the first proclamation of the gospel the name of the Lord was glorious throughout the whole earth; shall it not be much more so ere the end shall be? At any rate, this is

the desire of our souls. Meanwhile, let us endeavour to sanctify every day with praise to God. At early dawn let us emulate the opening flowers and the singing birds,

> "Chanting every day their lauds,
> While the grove their song applauds;
> Wake for shame my sluggish heart,
> Wake and gladly sing thy part."

It is a marvel of mercy that the sun should rise on the rebellious sons of men, and prepare for the undeserving fruitful seasons and days of pleasantness: let us for this prodigy of goodness praise the Lord of all. From hour to hour let us renew the strain, for each moment brings its mercy; and when the sun sinks to his rest, let us not cease our music, but lift up the vesper hymn—

> "Father of heaven and earth!
> I bless thee for the night,
> The soft still night!
> The holy pause of care and mirth,
> Of sound and light.
> Now far in glade and dell,
> Flower-cup, and bud, and bell
> Have shut around the sleeping woodlark's nest,
> The bee's long murmuring toils are done,
> And I, the o'erwearied one,
> Bless thee, O God, O Father of the oppressed!
> With my last waking thought."

4. "*The* LORD *is high above all nations.*" Though the Gentiles knew him not, yet was Jehovah their ruler: their false gods were no gods, and their kings were puppets in his hands. The Lord is high above all the learning, judgment, and imagination of heathen sages, and far beyond the pomp and might of the monarchs of the nations. Like the great arch of the firmament, the presence of the Lord spans all the lands where dwell the varied tribes of men, for his providence is universal: this may well excite our confidence and praise. "*And his glory above the heavens:*" higher than the loftiest part of creation; the clouds are the dust of his feet, and sun, moon, and stars twinkle far below his throne. Even the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. His glory cannot be set forth by the whole visible universe, nor even by the solemn pomp of angelic armies; it is above all conception and imagination, for he is God—infinite. Let us above all adore him who is above all.

5. "*Who is like unto the* LORD *our God?*" The challenge will never be answered. None can be compared with him for an instant; Israel's God is without parallel; our own God in covenant stands alone, and none can be likened unto him. Even those whom he has made like himself in some respects are not like him in godhead, for his divine attributes are many of them incommunicable and inimitable. None of the metaphors and figures by which the Lord is set forth in the Scriptures can give us a complete idea of him; his full resemblance is borne by nothing in earth or in heaven. Only in Jesus is the Godhead seen, but he unhesitatingly declared "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "*Who dwelleth on high.*" In the height of his abode none can be like him. His throne, his whole character, his person, his being, everything about him, is lofty, and infinitely majestic, so that none can be likened unto him. His serene mind abides in the most elevated condition, he is never dishonoured, nor does he stoop from the pure holiness and absolute perfection of his character. His saints are said to dwell on high, and in this they are the reflection of his glory; but as for himself, the height of his dwelling-place surpasses thought, and he rises far above the most exalted of his glorified people.

> "Eternal Power! whose high abode
> Becomes the grandeur of a God:
> Infinite lengths beyond the bounds
> Where stars revolve their little rounds.

"The lowest step around thy seat
Rises too high for Gabriel's feet;
In vain the tall archangel tries
To reach thine height with wond'ring eyes.

"Lord, what shall earth and ashes do?
We would adore our Maker too;
From sin and dust to thee we cry,
The Great, the Holy, and the High!"

6. "*Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!*" He dwells so far on high that even to observe heavenly things he must humble himself. He must stoop to view the skies, and bow to see what angels do. What, then, must be his condescension, seeing that he observes the humblest of his servants upon earth, and makes them sing for joy like Mary when she said, "Thou hast regarded the low estate of thine handmaiden." How wonderful are those words of Isaiah, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Heathen philosophers could not believe that the great God was observant of the small events of human history; they pictured him as abiding in serene indifference to all the wants and woes of his creatures. "Our Rock is not as their rock"; we have a God who is high above all gods, and yet who is our Father, knowing what we have need of before we ask him; our Shepherd, who supplies our needs; our Guardian, who counts the hairs of our heads; our tender and considerate Friend, who sympathizes in all our griefs. Truly the name of our condescending God should be praised wherever it is known.

7. "*He raiseth up the poor out of the dust.*" This is an instance of his gracious stoop of love: he frequently lifts the lowest of mankind out of their poverty and degradation and places them in positions of power and honour. His good Spirit is continually visiting the down-trodden, giving beauty for ashes to those who are cast down, and elevating the hearts of his mourners till they shout for joy. These upliftings of grace are here ascribed directly to the divine hand, and truly those who have experienced them will not doubt the fact that it is the Lord alone who brings his people up from the dust of sorrow and death. When no hand but his can help he interposes, and the work is done. It is worth while to be cast down to be so divinely raised from the dust. "*And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill,*" whereon they lay like worthless refuse, cast off and cast out, left as they thought to rot into destruction, and to be everlastingly forgotten. How great a stoop from the height of his throne to a dunghill! How wonderful that power which occupies itself in lifting up beggars, all befouled with the filthiness in which they lay! For he lifts them *out of* the dunghill, not disdaining to search them out from amidst the base things of the earth that he may by their means bring to nought the great ones, and pour contempt upon all human glorying. What a dunghill was that upon which we lay by nature! What a mass of corruption is our original estate! What a heap of loathsomeness we have accumulated by our sinful lives! What reeking abominations surround us in the society of our fellow men! We could never have risen out of all this by our own efforts, it was a sepulchre in which we saw corruption, and were as dead men. Almighty were the arms which lifted us, which are still lifting us, and will lift us into the perfection of heaven itself. Praise ye the Lord.

8. "*That he may set him with princes.*" The Lord does nothing by halves: when he raises men from the dust he is not content till he places them among the peers of his kingdom. We are made kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever. Instead of poverty, he gives us the wealth of princes; and instead of dishonour, he gives us a more exalted rank than that of the great ones of the earth. "*Even with the princes of his people.*" All his people are princes, and so the text teaches us that God places needy souls whom he

favours among the princes of princes. He often enables those who have been most despairing to rise to the greatest heights of spirituality and gracious attainment, for those who once were last shall be first. Paul, though less than the least of all saints, was, nevertheless, made to be not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles; and in our own times, Bunyan, the blaspheming tinker, was raised into another John, whose dream almost rivals the visions of the Apocalypse.

"Wonders of grace to God belong,
Repeat his mercies in your song."

Such verses as these should give great encouragement to those who are lowest in their own esteem. The Lord poureth contempt upon princes; but as for those who are in the dust and on the dunghill, he looks upon them with compassion, acts towards them in grace, and in their case displays the riches of his glory by Christ Jesus. Those who have experienced such amazing favour should sing continual hallelujahs to the God of their salvation.

9. "*He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.*" The strong desire of the easterns to have children caused the birth of offspring to be hailed as the choicest of favours, while barrenness was regarded as a curse; hence this verse is placed last as if to crown the whole, and to serve as a climax to the story of God's mercy. The glorious Lord displays his condescending grace in regarding those who are despised on account of their barrenness, whether it be of body or of soul. Sarah, Rachel, the wife of Manoah, Hannah, Elizabeth, and others were all instances of the miraculous power of God in literally fulfilling the statement of the psalmist. Women were not supposed to have a house till they had children; but in certain cases where childless women pined in secret the Lord visited them in mercy, and made them not only to have a house, but to keep it. The Gentile church is a spiritual example upon a large scale of the gift of fruitfulness after long years of hopeless barrenness; and the Jewish church in the latter days will be another amazing display of the same quickening power: long forsaken for her spiritual adultery, Israel shall be forgiven, and restored, and joyously shall she keep that house which now is left unto her desolate. Nor is this all, each believer in the Lord Jesus must at times have mourned his lamentable barrenness; he has appeared to be a dry tree yielding no fruit to the Lord, and yet when visited by the Holy Ghost, he has found himself suddenly to be like Aaron's rod, which budded, and blossomed, and brought forth almonds. Or ever we have been aware, our barren heart has kept house, and entertained the Saviour, our graces have been multiplied as if many children had come to us at a single birth, and we have exceedingly rejoiced before the Lord. Then have we marvelled greatly at the Lord who dwelleth on high, that he has deigned to visit such poor worthless things. Like Mary, we have lifted up our Magnificat, and like Hannah, we have said, "There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."

"*Praise ye the* LORD." The music concludes upon its key-note. The psalm is a circle, ending where it began, praising the Lord from its first syllable to its last. May our life-psalm partake of the same character, and never know a break or a conclusion. In an endless circle let us bless the Lord, whose mercies never cease. Let us praise him in youth, and all along our years of strength; and when we bow in the ripeness of abundant age, let us still praise the Lord, who doth not cast off his old servants. Let us not only praise God ourselves, but exhort others to do it; and if we meet with any of the needy who have been enriched, and with the barren who have been made fruitful, let us join with them in extolling the name of him whose mercy endureth for ever. Having been ourselves lifted from spiritual beggary and barrenness, let us never forget our former estate or the grace which has visited us, but world without end let us praise the Lord. Hallelujah.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—With this Psalm begins the *Hallel*, which is recited at the three great feasts, at the feast of the Dedication (*Chanucca*) and at the new moons, and not on New Year's day and the day of Atonement, because a cheerful song of praise does not harmonise with the mournful solemnity of these days. And they are recited only in fragments during the last days of the Passover, for "my creatures, saith the Holy One, blessed be He, were drowned in the sea, and ought ye to break out into songs of rejoicing?" In the family celebration of the Passover night it is divided into two parts, the one half, Ps. cxiii, cxiv, being sung before the repast, before the emptying of the second festal cup, and the other half, Ps. cxv.—cxviii., after the repast, after the filling of the fourth cup, to which the ὑμνήσαντες (Matt. xxvi. 30, Mark xiv. 26), or singing a hymn, after the institution of the Lord's Supper, which was connected with the fourth festal cup, may refer. Paulus Burgensis styles Ps. cxiii.—cxviii. *Alleluja Judæorum magnum.* (The great Alleluiah of the Jews.) This designation is also frequently found elsewhere. But according to the prevailing custom, Ps. cxiii.—cxviii., and more particularly Ps. cxv.—cxviii., are called only *Hallel*, and Ps. cxxxvi., with its "for his mercy endureth for ever" repeated twenty-six times, bears the name of "*The Great Hallel*" (הַלֵּל הַגָּדוֹל). —*Frank Delitzsch.*

Whole Psalm.—The Jews have handed down the tradition, that this Psalm, and those that follow on to the cxviiith, were all sung at the Passover; and they are denominated "*The Great Hallel.*" This tradition shows, at all events, that the ancient Jews perceived in these six psalms some link of close connection. They all sing of God the Redeemer, in some aspect of his redeeming character; and this being so, while they suited the paschal feast, we can see how appropriate they would be in the lips of the Redeemer, in his Upper Room. Thus—

In Psalm cxiii., he sang praise to him who redeems from the lowest depth.

In Psalm cxiv., he sang praise to him who once redeemed Israel, and shall redeem Israel again.

In Psalm cxv., he uttered a song—over earth's fallen idols—to him who blesses Israel and the world.

In Psalm cxvi., he sang his resurrection-song of thanksgiving by anticipation.

In Psalm cxvii., he led the song of praise for the great congregation.

In Psalm cxviii. (just before leaving the Upper Room to go to Gethsemane), he poured forth the story of his suffering, conflict, triumph and glorification.—*A. A. Bonar.*

Whole Psalm.—An attentive reader of the Book of Psalms will observe that almost every one of them has a view to Christianity. Many, if not most of the psalms, were without doubt occasioned originally by accidents of the life that befell their royal author; they were therefore at the same time both descriptive of the situation and life, the actions and sufferings, of King David, and predictive also of our Saviour, who was all along represented by King David, from whose loins he was descended according to the flesh. But *this* psalm appears to be *wholly* written with a view to Christianity. It begins with an exhortation to all true servants and zealous worshippers of God, to "*praise his name,*" at all times, and in all places; "*from this time forth and for evermore,*" and "*from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.*" And the ground of this praise and adoration is set forth in the following verses to be,—first, the glorious majesty of his Divine nature; and next, the singular goodness of it as displayed to us in his works of providence, particularly by exalting those who are abased, and his making the barren to become fruitful. His lifting the poor out of the mire, and making the barren woman to become fruitful, may, at first sight, seem an odd mixture of ideas. But a right notion of the prophetic language will solve the difficulty; and teach us, that both the

expressions are in fact very nearly related, and signify much the same thing. For by the "*poor*" are here meant those who are destitute of all heavenly knowledge (the only true and real riches) and who are sunk in the mire and filth of sin. So, again, his making "*the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children,*" is a prophetic metaphor, or allusion to the fruitfulness of the Church in bringing forth sons or professors of the true religion. My interpretation of both these expressions is warrantable from so many parallel passages of Scripture. I shall only observe that here the profession of the Christian faith throughout the whole earth is foretold; as also the particular direction or point of the compass, toward which Christianity should by the course of God's providence be steered and directed, *viz.*, from East to West, or "*from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same.*"—*James Bate*, 1703—1775.

Verse 1.—"*Praise ye the* LORD." "*Praise.*" The הַלְלוּ is repeated. This repetition is not without significance. It is for the purpose of waking us up out of our torpor. We are all too dull and slow in considering and praising the blessings of God. There is, therefore, necessity for these stimuli. Then this repetition signifies assiduity and perseverance in sounding forth the praises of God. It is not sufficient once and again to praise God, but his praises ought to be always sung in the Church.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 1.—"*Praise ye the* LORD." This praising God rests not in the mere speculation or idle contemplation of the Divine excellence, floating only in the brain, or gliding upon the tongue, but in such quick and lively apprehensions of them as to sink down into the heart, and there beget affections suitable to them; for it will make us love him for his goodness, respect him for his greatness, fear him for his justice, dread him for his power, adore him for his wisdom, and for all his attributes make us live in constant awe and obedience to him. This is to praise God, without which all other courting and complimenting of him is but mere flattery and hypocrisy. . . . God Almighty endowed us with higher and nobler faculties than other creatures, for this end, that we should set forth his praise; for though other things were made to administer the matter and occasion, yet man alone was designed and qualified to exercise the act of glorifying God. . . . In short, God Almighty hath so closely twisted his own glory and our happiness together, that at the same time we advance the one we promote the other.—*Matthew Hole*, 1730.

Verse 1.—"*Praise, O ye servants of the* LORD." From the exhortation to praise God, and the declaration of his deserving to be praised; learn, that as it is all men's duty to praise the Lord, so in special it is the duty of his ministers, and officers of his house. First, because their office doth call for the discharge of it publicly. Next, because as they should be best acquainted with the reasons of his praise, so also should they be the fittest instruments to declare it. And lastly, because the ungodly are deaf unto the exhortation, and dumb in the obedience of it; therefore when he hath said, "*Praise ye the Lord,*" he subjoineth, "*Praise, O ye servants of the Lord.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"*Ye servants of the* LORD." All men owe this duty to God, as being the workmanship of his hands; Christians above other men, as being the sheep of his pasture; preachers of the word above other Christians, as being pastors of his sheep, and so consequently patterns in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in pureness. 1 Tim. iv. 12.—*John Boys.*

Verses 1—3.

Hallelujah, praise the Lord!
Praise, ye servants, praise his name!
Be Jehovah's praise ador'd,
Now and evermore the same!
Where the orient sun-beams gleam,
Where they sink in ocean's stream,
Through the circuit of his rays
Be your theme Jehovah's praise.

Richard Mant.

Verse 2.—"*Blessed be the name of the* LORD." Let then, O man, thy labouring soul strive to conceive (for 'tis impossible to express) what an immense debt of gratitude thou owest to him, who by his creating goodness called thee out of nothing to make thee a partaker of reason and even a sharer of immortality with himself; who by his preserving goodness designs to conduct thee safe through the various stages of thy eternal existence; and who by his redeeming goodness hath prepared for thee a happiness too big for the comprehension of a human understanding. Canst thou receive such endearments of love to thee and all mankind with insensibility and coldness? . . . In the whole compass of language what word is expressive enough to paint the black ingratitude of that man who is unaffected by, and entirely regardless of, the goodness of God his Creator and the mercies of Christ?—*Jeremiah Seed*, 1747.

Verse 2.—"*Blessed be the name of the* LORD," etc. No doubt the disciples that sat at that paschal table would repeat with mingled feelings of thanksgiving and sadness that ascription of praise. "*Blessed be the name of the* LORD *from this time forth and for evermore.*" But what Israelite in all the paschal chambers at Jerusalem on that night, as he sang the hallel or hymn, or which of the disciples at the sorrowing board of Jesus, could have understood or entered into the full meaning of the expression, "*from this time forth?*" From what time? I think St. John gives us a clue to the very hour and moment of which the Psalmist, perhaps unconsciously, spake. He tells us, that when the traitor Judas had received the sop, he immediately went out; and that when he was gone out to clench as it were and ratify his treacherous purpose, Jesus said, "*Now* is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." From that time forth, when by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the Son of man was about to be delivered into the hands of wicked men, and crucified and slain, as Jesus looked at those around him, as sorrow had indeed filled their hearts, and as with all-seeing, prescient eye he looked onwards and beheld all those that should hereafter believe on him through their word, with what significance and emphasis of meaning may we imagine the blessed Jesus on that night of anguish to have uttered these words of the hymn, "*Blessed be the name of the* LORD *from this time forth and for evermore*"! "A few more hours and the covenant will be sealed in my own blood; the compact ratified, when I hang upon the cross." And with what calm and confident assurance of triumph does he look upon that cross of shame; with what overflowing love does he point to it and say, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"! It is the very same here in this Paschal Psalm; and how must the Saviour's heart have rejoiced even in the contemplation of those sufferings that awaited him, as he uttered this prediction, "*From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the* LORD'S *name is to be praised*"! "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die:" and thus from that hour to the present the Lord hath added daily to the church those whom in every age and in every clime he hath chosen unto salvation, till, in his own appointed fulness of time, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, all nations shall do him service, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 2.—"*From this time forth and for evermore.*" The servants of the Lord are to sing his praises in this life to the world's end; and in the next life, world without end.—*John Boys.*

Verse 3.—"*From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same.*" That is everywhere, from east to west. These western parts of the world are particularly prophesied of to enjoy the worship of God after the Jews which were in the east; and these islands of ours that lie in the sea, into which the sun is said to go down, which is an expression of the old Greek poets; and the prophet here useth such a word in the Hebrew, where the west is called, according to the vulgar conceit, the sunset, or the sun's going down, or going in.—*Samuel Torshell*, 1641.

Verses 4, 5.—"*The* LORD *is high.*" . . . "*The* LORD *our God dwelleth on high.*" But how *high* is he? *Answer* I. So high, that all creatures bow before him and do homage to him according to their several aptitudes and abilities. John brings them all in, attributing to him the crown of glory, putting it from themselves, but setting it upon his head, as a royalty due only to him. (Rev. v. 13.) 1. Some by way of *subjection*, stooping to him: angels and saints worship him, acknowledging his highness, by denying their own, but setting up his will as their supreme law and excellency. 2. Others acknowledge his eminency by their *consternation* upon the least shining forth of his glory: when he discovers but the emblems of his greatness, devils tremble, men quake, James ii. 19; Isai. xxxiii. 14. Thirdly, even inanimate creatures, by *compliance* with, and ready subjection to, the impressions of his power, Hab. iii. 9—11: Isai. xlviii. 13; Dan. iv. 35. . . . II. He is so high that he surmounts all created capacity to comprehend him, Job xi. 7—9. So that indeed, in David's phrase, his greatness is "*unsearchable*," Ps. cxlv. 3. In a word, he is so high, 1. That no bodily eye hath ever, or can possibly see him. 2. Neither can the eye of the understanding perfectly reach him. He dwells in inaccessible light that no mortal eye can attain to.—*Condensed from a sermon by Thomas Hodges, entitled, "A Glimpse of God's Glory,"* 1642.

Verse 5.—"*Who is like unto the* LORD *our God?*" It is the nature of love, that the one whom we love we prefer to all others, and we ask, *Who is like my beloved?* The world has not his like. Thus love thinks ever of one, who in many things is inferior to many others; for in human affairs the judgment of love is blind. But those who love the Lord their God, though they should glow with more ardent love for him, and should ask, Who is as the Lord our God? in this matter would not be mistaken, but would think altogether most correctly. For there is no being, either in heaven or in earth, who can be in any way likened unto the Lord God. Even love itself cannot conceive, think, speak concerning God whom we love as he really is.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 5.—"*Who is like unto the* LORD *our God,*" etc. Among the gods of the nations as Kimchi; or among the angels of heaven, or among any of the mighty monarchs on earth; there is none like him for the perfections of his nature, for his wisdom, power, truth, and faithfulness; for his holiness, justice, goodness, grace, and mercy. Who is eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent? Nor for the works of his hands, his works of creation, providence, and grace; none ever did the like. What makes this reflection the more delightful to truly good men is, that this God is their God; and all this is true of our Immanuel, God with us, who is God over all, and the only Saviour and Redeemer; and there is none in heaven and earth like him, or to be desired beside him.—*John Gill.*

Verse 5.—"*The Lord our God who dwelleth on high.*" God is on high in respect of place or dwelling. It is true he is in the aërial and starry heaven by his essence and power; but the heaven of the blessed is his throne: not as if he were so confined to that place as to be excluded from others, for "the heaven of heavens cannot contain him"; but in respect of manifestation he is said to be there, because in that place he chiefly manifests his glory and goodness. In respect of his essence he is *high* indeed, inexpressibly high in excellency above all beings, not only in Abraham's phrase, "*The High God,*" but in David's, "*The Lord most High.*" Alas! what are all created beings in respect of him, with all their excellences, but nothing and vanity? . . . For these excellences are divers things in the creatures, but one in God; they are accidents in the creatures, but essence in God; they are in the creature with some alloy or other, they are like the moon when they shine brightest, yet are spots of imperfection to be found in them. In respect to measure, he is infinitely above them all. Alas, they possess some small drops in respect to the fountain, some poor glimmering rays in respect to this glorious sun: in a word, he is an infinite ocean of perfection, without either

brink or bottom.—*Thomas Hodges*, in a *Sermon preached before the House of Commons*, 1642.

Verse 5.—God is said not only to be on high, but to "*dwell*" on high; this intimates *calm and composed operation*, and it is proper for us to take this view of the character of God's administration. You recollect that in all ages unbelief has been in some respect rendered plausible by the delays of God in the accomplishment of his designs. So, in St. Peter's time, it would seem that because the apostles and preachers of Christianity had dwelt much on Christ's coming to judgment, they cried out, "Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?" What is the apostle's answer to this? His first answer, I grant, is, that all things have not continued as they were from the creation, for there was a flood of waters, and those who said, Where is the promise of his coming? in the days of Noah were at last answered by the bursting earth and the breaking heavens. . . . . That was his first answer; but his second answer contains the principle that, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The Being who is from everlasting to everlasting is under no necessity to hurry his plans; therefore he hath fixed the times and the seasons—they are all with him, and *he dwelleth on high.—Richard Watson*, 1831.

Verses 5, 6.—The philosophy of the world, even in the present day, has its elevated and magnificent views of the Divine Being; yet it would seem uniform, whether among the sages of the heathen world or among the philosophers of the present day, that the loftier their views are even of the Divine nature, the more they tend to distrust and unbelief; and that, just in proportion as they have thought nobly of God, so the impression has deepened—that, with respect to individuals at least, they were not the subjects of his immediate care. The doctrine of a particular providence, and the doctrine of direct divine influence upon the heart of man, have by them always been considered absurd and fanatical. Now, when I turn to the sages of inspiration—to the holy men of old, who thought and spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, I find quite a different result—that in proportion to the views they had of the glory of God, so was their confidence and hope.

That two such opposite results should spring from the same order of thoughts with respect to the Divine Being, is a singular fact, which demands and deserves some enquiry. How is it that, among the men of the world, wise as they are, in proportion as they have had high and exalted views of God, those lofty ideas tend to distrust; while just in proportion as we are enlightened on the very same subjects by the Scriptures of truth, rightly and spiritually understood, that we as well as the authors of these sacred books, in proportion as we see the glory and the grandeur of God, are excited to a filial and comforting trust? There are two propositions in the text which human reason could never unite. "*Who dwelleth on high*"—but yet he "*humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth.*" And the reason why the mere unassisted human faculties could never unite these two ideas is, that they could not, in the nature of things, be united, but by a third discovery, which must have come from God himself, and show the two in perfect harmony—the discovery that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—*Richard Watson*, 1831.

Verses 5, 6.—The structure of this passage in the original is singular, and is thus stated and commented on by Bp. Lowth, in his 19th Prælection:—

Who is like Jehovah our God?
Who dwelleth on high.
Who looketh below.
In heaven and in earth.

The latter member is to be divided, and assigned in its two divisions to the two former members; so that the sense may be, "who dwelleth on high in heaven, and looketh below on the things which are in earth."—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 6.—"*Who humbleth himself.*" Whatever may be affirmed of God, may be affirmed of him infinitely, and whatever he is, he is infinitely. So the psalmist, in this place, does not speak of God as humble, but as infinitely and superlatively so, humble beyond all conception and comparison; he challenges the whole universe of created nature, from the highest immortal spirit in heaven to the lowest mortal on earth, to show a being endued with so much humility, as the adorable majesty of the great God of Heaven and earth. . . . If some instances of the Divine humility surprise, the following may amaze us:—To see the great King of heaven stooping from his height, and condescending himself to offer terms of reconciliation to his rebellious creatures! To see offended majesty courting the offenders to accept of pardon! To see God persuading, entreating and beseeching men to return to him with such earnestness and importunity, as if his very life were bound up in them, and his own happiness depended upon theirs! To see the adorable Spirit of God, with infinite long-suffering and gentleness, submitting to the contempt and insults of such miserable, despicable wretches as sinful mortals are! Is not this amazing?—*Valentine Nalson,* 1641—1724.

Verse 6.—"*Who humbleth himself to behold.*"—If it be such condescension for God to behold things in heaven and earth, what an amazing condescension was it for the Son of God to come from heaven to earth and take our nature upon him, that he might seek and save them that were lost! Here indeed he humbled himself.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—"*He raiseth up the poor,*" etc. There is no doubt a reference in this to the respect which God pays even to the lower ranks of the race, seeing that "he raiseth up the poor, and lifteth up the needy." I have no doubt there is reference throughout the whole of this psalm to evangelical times: that, in this respect, it is a prophetic psalm, including a reference especially to Christianity, as it may be called by eminence and distinction the religion of the poor—its greatest glory. For when John the Baptist sent two disciples to Jesus, to know whether he was the Messiah or not, the answer of our Lord was, "The blind see, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised"—all extraordinary events—miracles, in short, which proved his divine commission. And he summed up the whole by saying, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them;" as great a miracle as any—as great a distinction as any. There never was a religion but the true religion, in all its various dispensations, that had equal respect to all classes of society. In all others there was a privileged class, but here there is none. Perhaps one of the most interesting views of Christianity we can take is its wonderful adaptation to the character and circumstances of the poor. What an opportunity does it furnish for the manifestation of the bright and mild graces of the Holy Spirit! What sources of comfort does it open to mollify the troubles of life! and how often, in choosing the poor, rich in faith, to make them heirs of the kingdom, does God exalt the poor out of the dust, and the needy from the dunghill!—*Richard Watson.*

Verse 7.—"*He raiseth up the poor,*" etc. Gideon is fetched from threshing, Saul from seeking the asses, and David from keeping the sheep; the apostles from fishing are sent to be "fishers of men." The treasure of the gospel is put into earthen vessels, and the weak and the foolish ones of the world pitched upon to be preachers of it, to confound the "wise and mighty" (1 Cor. i. 27, 28), that the excellency of the power may be of God, and all may see that promotion comes from him.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—"*He raiseth up the poor.*" The highest honour, which was ever done to any mere creature, was done out of regard to the lowest humility; the Son of God had such regard to the lowliness of the blessed virgin, that he did her the honour to choose her for the mother of his holy humanity. It is an observation of S. Chrysostom, that that very hand which the humble John Baptist thought not worthy to unloose the shoe on our blessed Saviour's feet, that hand our Lord thought worthy to baptize his sacred head.—*Valentine Nalson.*

Verse 7.—"*And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill*"; which denotes a mean condition; so one born in a mean place, and brought up in a mean manner, is sometimes represented as taken out of a dunghill; and also it is expressive of a filthy one; men by sin are not only brought into a low estate, but into a loathsome one, and are justly abominable in the sight of God, and yet he lifts them out of it: the phrases of *raising up* and *lifting out* suppose them to be fallen, as men are in Adam, fallen from a state of honour and glory, in and out of which they cannot deliver themselves; it is Christ's work, and his only, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to help or lift up his servant Israel. Isa. xlix. 6; Luke i. 54; see 1 Sam. ii. 8.—*John Gill.*

Verse 7.—"*The poor . . the needy.*" Rejoice, then, in the favourable notice God taketh of you. The highest and greatest of beings vouchsafes to regard *you.* Though you are poor and mean, and men overlook you; though your brethren hate you, and your friends go far from you, yet hear! God looketh down from his majestic throne upon you. Amidst the infinite variety of his works, you are not overlooked. Amidst the nobler services of ten thousand times ten thousand saints and angels, not *one* of your fervent prayers or humble groans escapes his ear.—*Job Orton*, 1717—1783.

Verse 7.—Almighty God cannot look above himself, as having no superiors; nor about himself, as having no equals; he beholds such as are below him; and therefore the lower a man is, the nearer unto God; he resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble, 1 Pet. v. 5. He pulls down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth them of low degree. The Most High hath special eye to such as are most humble; for, as it followeth in our text, "*he taketh up the simple out of the dust, and lifteth the poor out of the dirt.*"—*John Boys.*

Verse 7.—"*Dunghill.*" An emblem of the deepest poverty and desertion; for in Syria and Palestine the man who is shut out from society lies upon the *mezbele* (the dunghill or heap of ashes), by day calling upon the passers-by for alms, and by night hiding himself in the ashes that have been warmed by the sun.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 7.—"*Dunghill.*" The passages of the Bible, in which the word occurs, all seem to refer, as Parkhurst remarks, to the stocks of cow-dung and other offal stuff, which the easterns for want of wood were obliged to lay up for fuel.—*Richard Mant.*

Verses 7, 8.—These verses are taken almost word for word from the prayer of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 8. The transition to the "*people*" is all the more natural, as Hannah, considering herself at the conclusion as the type of the church, with which every individual among the Israelites felt himself much more closely entwined than can easily be the case among ourselves, draws out of the salvation imparted to herself joyful prospects for the future.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 8.—"*Even with the princes of his people.*" It is the honour that cometh from God that alone exalts. Whatever account the world may take of a poor man, he may be more precious in the eyes of God than the highest among men. The humble poor are here ranked, not with the princes of the earth, but with "*the princes of his people.*" The distinctions in this world, even among those who serve the same God, are as nothing in his sight when contrasted with that honour which is grounded on the free grace of God to his own. But here, also, the fulness of this statement will only be seen in the world to come, when all the faithful will be owned as kings and priests unto God.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 9.—"*He maketh the barren woman to keep house,*" etc. Should a married woman, who has long been considered sterile, become a mother, her joy, and that of her husband and friends, will be most extravagant. "They called her *Malady*," that is, "Barren," "but she has given us good fruit." "My neighbours pointed at me, and said, *Malady:* but what will they say now?" A

man who on any occasion manifests great delight, is represented to be like the barren woman who has at length borne a child. Anything which is exceedingly valuable is thus described: "This is as precious as the son of the barren woman"; that is, of her who had long been reputed barren.—*Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 9.—"*He maketh the barren woman to keep house,*" etc. As baseness in men, so barrenness in women is accounted a great unhappiness. But as God lifteth up the beggar out of the mire, to set him with princes, even so doth he "*make the barren woman a joyful mother of children.*" He governs all things in the private family, as well as in the public weal. Children and the fruit of the womb are a gift and heritage that cometh of the Lord, Ps. cxxvii. 3; and therefore the Papists in praying to S. Anne for children, and the Gentiles in calling upon Diana, Juno, Latona, are both in error. It is God only who makes the barren woman "*a mother,*" and that "*a joyful mother.*" Every mother is joyful at the first, according to that of Christ, "a woman when she travaileth hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."

Divines apply this also mystically to Christ, affirming that he made the church of the Gentiles, heretofore "*barren,*" "*a joyful mother of children,*" according to that of the prophet: "Rejoice, *O barren*, that didst not bear; break forth into joy and rejoice, thou that didst not travail with child: for the desolate hath more children than the married wife, saith the Lord," Isai. liv. 1. Or it may be construed of true Christians: all of us are by nature barren of goodness, conceived and born in sin, not able to think a good thought (2 Cor. iii. 5); but the Father of lights and mercies makes us fruitful and abundant always in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 58); he giveth us grace to be fathers and mothers of many good deeds, which are our children and best heirs, eternizing our name for ever.—*John Boys.*

Verse 9.—"*The barren woman*" is the poor, forsaken, distressed Christian church, whom the false church oppresses, defies, and persecutes, and regards as useless, miserable, barren, because she herself is greater and more populous, the greatest part of the world.—*Joshua Arndt*, 1626—1685.

Verse 9.—"*Praise ye the* LORD." We may look abroad, and see abundant occasion for praising God,—in his condescension to human affairs,—in his lifting up the poor from the humblest condition,—in his exalting those of lowly rank to places of honour, trust, wealth, and power; but, after all, if we wish to find occasions of praise that will most tenderly affect the heart, and be connected with the warmest affections of the soul, they will be most likely to be found in the domestic circle—in the mutual love—the common joy—the tender feelings—which bind together the members of a family.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 9.—"*Praise ye the* LORD." The very hearing of the comfortable changes which the Lord can make and doth make the afflicted to find, is a matter of refreshment to all, and of praise to God from all.—*David Dickson.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Whole Psalm.—The psalm contains three parts:—I. An exhortation to God's servants to praise him. II. A form set down how and where to praise him, ver. 2, 3. III. The reasons to persuade us to it. 1. By his infinite power, ver. 4, 5. 2. His providence, as displayed in heaven and earth, ver. 6.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—The repetitions show, 1. The importance of praise. 2. Our many obligations to render it. 3. Our backwardness in the duty. 4. The heartiness and frequency with which it should be rendered. 5. The need of calling upon others to join with us.

Verse 1.—I. To whom praise is due: "the Lord." II. From whom it is due: "ye servants of the Lord." III. For what is it due: his "name." 1.

For all names descriptive of what he is in himself. 2. For all names descriptive of what he is to his servants.—*G. R.*

Verses 1, 9.—"Praise ye the Lord." I. Begin and end life with it, and do the same with holy service, patient suffering, and everything else. II. Fill up the interval with praise. Run over the intervening verses.

Verse 2.—I. The work of heaven begun on earth: to praise the name of the Lord. II. The work of earth continued in heaven: "and for evermore." If the praise begun on earth be continued in heaven, we must be in heaven to continue the praise.—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—1. It is time to begin to praise: "from this time." Is there not special reason, from long arrears, from present duty, etc.? 2. There is no time for leaving off praise: "and for evermore." None supposable or excusable.

Verse 3.—God is to be praised. 1. All the day. 2. All the world over. 3. Publicly in the light. 4. Amidst daily duties. 5. Always—because it is always day somewhere.

Verse 3.—1. Canonical hours abolished. 2. Holy places abolished—since we cannot be always in them. 3. Every time and place consecrated.

Verses 5, 6.—The greatness of God as viewed from below, ver. 5. II. The condescension of God as viewed from above, ver. 6. 1. In creation. 2. In the Incarnation. 3. In redemption.—*G. R.*

Verses 5, 6.—The unparalleled condescension of God. 1. None are so great, and therefore able to stoop so low. 2. None are so good, and therefore so willing to stoop. 3. None are so wise, and therefore so able to "behold" or know the needs of little things. 4. None are infinite, and therefore able to enter into minutiæ and sympathize with the smallest grief: Infinity is seen in the minute as truly as in the immense.

Verse 6.—I. The same God rules in heaven and earth. II. Both spheres are dependent for happiness upon his beholding them. III. They both enjoy his consideration. IV. All things done in them are equally under his inspection.

Verse 7.—The gospel and its special eye to the poor.

Verses 7, 8.—I. Where men are? In the dust of sorrow and on the dunghill of sin. II. Who interferes to help them? He who dwelleth on high. III. What does he effect for them? "Raiseth, lifteth, setteth among princes, among princes of his people."

Verse 8.—Elevation to the peerage of heaven; or, the Royal Family increased.

Verse 9.—For mothers' meetings. "A joyful mother of children." I. It is a joy to be a mother. II. It is specially so to have living, healthy, obedient children. III. But best of all to have Christian children. Praise is due to the Lord who gives such blessings.

Verse 9.—I. A household God, or, God in the Household: "He maketh," etc. Have you children? It is of God. Have you lost children? It is of God. Have you been without children? It is of God. II. Household worship, or, the God of the Household: "Praise ye the Lord." 1. In the family. 2. For family mercies.—*G. R.*

WORK ON THE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH PSALM.

There are Expositions of Psalms cxiii. and cxiv. in the Works of John Boys, Dean of Canterbury, 1638; folio edition, pp. 846—861.

PSALM CXIV.

SUBJECT AND DIVISION.—*This sublime* SONG OF THE EXODUS *is one and indivisible. True poetry has here reached its climax: no human mind has ever been able to equal, much less to excel, the grandeur of this Psalm. God is spoken of as leading forth his people from Egypt to Canaan, and causing the whole earth to be moved at his coming. Things inanimate are represented as imitating the actions of living creatures when the Lord passes by. They are apostrophised and questioned with marvellous force of language, till one seems to look upon the actual scene. The God of Jacob is exalted as having command over river, sea, and mountain, and causing all nature to pay homage and tribute before his glorious majesty.*

EXPOSITION.

WHEN Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

2 Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.

3 The sea saw *it*, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

4 The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.

5 What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?

6 Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams; *and* ye little hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

8 Which turned the rock *into* a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

1. "*When Israel went out of Egypt.*" The song begins with a burst, as if the poetic fury could not be restrained, but overleaped all bounds. The soul elevated and filled with a sense of divine glory cannot wait to fashion a preface, but springs at once into the middle of its theme. Israel emphatically came out of Egypt, out of the population among whom they had been scattered, from under the yoke of bondage, and from under the personal grasp of the king who had made the people into national slaves. Israel came out with a high hand and a stretched-out arm, defying all the power of the empire, and making the whole of Egypt to travail with sore anguish, as the chosen nation was as it were born out of its midst. "*The house of Jacob from a people of strange language.*" They had gone down into Egypt as a single family—"the house of Jacob"; and, though they had multiplied greatly, they were still so united, and were so fully regarded by God as a single unit, that they are rightly spoken of as the house of Jacob. They were as one man in their willingness to leave Goshen; numerous as they were, not a single individual stayed behind. Unanimity is a pleasing token of the divine presence, and one of its sweetest fruits. One of their inconveniences in Egypt was the difference of languages, which was very great. The Israelites appear to have regarded the Egyptians as stammerers and babblers, since they could not understand them, and they very naturally considered the Egyptians to be barbarians, as they would no doubt often beat them because they did not comprehend their orders. The language of foreign taskmasters is never musical in an exile's ear. How sweet it is to a Christian who has been compelled to hear the filthy conversation

of the wicked, when at last he is brought out from their midst to dwell among his own people!

2. "*Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.*" The pronoun "his" comes in where we should have looked for the name of God; but the poet is so full of thought concerning the Lord that he forgets to mention his name, like the spouse in the Song, who begins, "Let *him* kiss me," or Magdalene when she cried, "Tell me where thou hast laid *him*." From the mention of Judah and Israel certain critics have inferred that this Psalm must have been written after the division of the two kingdoms; but this is only another instance of the extremely slender basis upon which an hypothesis is often built up. Before the formation of the two kingdoms David had said, "Go number Israel and Judah," and this was common parlance, for Uriah the Hittite said, "The ark, and Israel and Judah abide in tents"; so that nothing can be inferred from the use of the two names. No division into two kingdoms can have been intended here, for the poet is speaking of the coming out of Egypt when the people were so united that he has just before called them "the house of Jacob." It would be quite as fair to prove from the first verse that the Psalm was written when the people were in union as to prove from the second that its authorship dates from their separation. Judah was the tribe which led the way in the wilderness march, and it was foreseen in prophecy to be the royal tribe, hence its poetical mention in this place. The meaning of the passage is that the whole people at the coming out of Egypt were separated unto the Lord to be a peculiar people, a nation of priests whose motto should be, "Holiness unto the Lord." Judah was the Lord's "holy thing," set apart for his special use. The nation was peculiarly Jehovah's dominion, for it was governed by a theocracy in which God alone was King. It was his domain in a sense in which the rest of the world was outside his kingdom. These were the young days of Israel, the time of her espousels, when she went after the Lord into the wilderness, her God leading the way with signs and miracles. The whole people were the shrine of Deity, and their camp was one great temple. What a change there must have been for the godly amongst them from the idolatries and blasphemies of the Egyptians to the holy worship and righteous rule of the great King in Jeshurun. They lived in a world of wonders, where God was seen in the wondrous bread they ate and in the water they drank, as well as in the solemn worship of his holy place. When the Lord is manifestly present in a church, and his gracious rule obediently owned, what a golden age has come, and what honourable privileges his people enjoy! May it be so among us.

3. "*The sea saw it, and fled*"; or rather, "The sea saw and fled"—it saw God and all his people following his lead, and it was struck with awe and fled away. A bold figure! The Red Sea mirrored the hosts which had come down to its shore, and reflected the cloud which towered high over all, as the symbol of the presence of the Lord: never had such a scene been imaged upon the surface of the Red Sea, or any other sea, before. It could not endure the unusual and astounding sight, and fleeing to the right and to the left, opened a passage for the elect people. A like miracle happened at the end of the great march of Israel, for "*Jordan was driven back.*" This was a swiftly-flowing river, pouring itself down a steep decline, and it was not merely divided, but its current was driven back so that the rapid torrent, contrary to nature, flowed up-hill. This was God's work: the poet does not sing of the suspension of natural laws, or of a singular phenomenon not readily to be explained; but to him the presence of God with his people is everything, and in his lofty song he tells how the river was driven back because the Lord was there. In this case poetry is nothing but the literal fact, and the fiction lies on the side of the atheistic critics who will suggest any explanation of the miracle rather than admit that the Lord made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all his people. The division of the sea and the drying up of the river are placed together though forty years intervened, because they were the opening and closing scenes of one great event. We may thus unite by faith our new birth and our departure out

of the world into the promised inheritance, for the God who led us out of the Egypt of our bondage under sin will also conduct us through the Jordan of death out of our wilderness wanderings in the desert of this tried and changeful life. It is all one and the same deliverance, and the beginning ensures the end.

4. "*The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.*" At the coming of the Lord to Mount Sinai, the hills moved; either leaping for joy in the presence of their Creator like young lambs; or, if you will, springing from their places in affright at the terrible majesty of Jehovah, and flying like a flock of sheep when alarmed. Men fear the mountains, but the mountains tremble before the Lord. Sheep and lambs move lightly in the meadows; but the hills, which we are wont to call eternal, were as readily made to move as the most active creatures. Rams in their strength, and lambs in their play, are not more stirred than were the solid hills when Jehovah marched by. Nothing is immovable but God himself: the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but the covenant of his grace abideth fast for ever and ever. Even thus do mountains of sin and hills of trouble move when the Lord comes forth to lead his people to their eternal Canaan. Let us never fear, but rather let out faith say unto this mountain, "Be thou removed hence and cast into the sea," and it shall be done.

5. "*What ailed thee, O thou sea?*" Wert thou terribly afraid? Did thy strength fail thee? Did thy very heart dry up? "What ailed thee, O thou sea, *that thou fleddest?*" Thou wert neighbour to the power of Pharaoh, but thou didst never fear his hosts; stormy wind could never prevail against thee so as to divide thee in twain; but when the way of the Lord was in thy great waters thou was seized with affright, and thou becamest a fugitive from before him. "*Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?*" What ailed thee, O quick descending river? Thy fountains had not dried up, neither had a chasm opened to engulph thee! The near approach of Israel and her God sufficed to make thee retrace thy steps. What aileth all our enemies that they fly when the Lord is on our side? What aileth hell itself that it is utterly routed when Jesus lifts up a standard against it? "Fear took hold upon them there," for fear of HIM the stoutest hearted did quake, and became as dead men.

6. "*Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?*" What ailed ye, that ye were thus moved? There is but one reply: the majesty of God made you to leap. A gracious mind will chide human nature for its strange insensibility, when the sea and the river, the mountains and the hills, are all sensitive to the presence of God. Man is endowed with reason and intelligence, and yet he sees unmoved that which the material creation beholds with fear. God has come nearer to us than ever he did to Sinai, or to Jordan, for he has assumed our nature, and yet the mass of mankind are neither driven back from their sins, nor moved in the paths of obedience.

7. "*Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.*" Or "from before the Lord, the Adonai, the Master and King." Very fitly does the Psalm call upon all nature again to feel a holy awe because its Ruler is still in its midst.

> "Quake when Jehovah walks abroad,
> Quake earth, at sight of Israel's God."

Let the believer feel that God is near, and he will serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Awe is not cast out by faith, but the rather it becomes deeper and more profound. The Lord is most reverenced where he is most loved.

8. "*Which turned the rock into a standing water,*" causing a mere or lake to stand at its foot, making the wilderness a pool: so abundant was the supply of water from the rock that it remained like water in a reservoir. "*The flint into a fountain of waters,*" which flowed freely in streams, following the tribes in their devious marches. Behold what God can do! It seemed impossible that the flinty rock should become a fountain; but he speaks, and it is done.

Not only do mountains move, but rocks yield rivers when the God of Israel wills that it should be so.

> "From stone and solid rock he brings
> The spreading lake, the gushing springs."

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together," for he it is and he alone who doeth such wonders as these. He supplies our temporal needs from sources of the most unlikely kind, and never suffers the stream of his liberality to fail. As for our spiritual necessities they are all met by the water and the blood which gushed of old from the riven rock, Christ Jesus: therefore let us extol the Lord our God.

Our deliverance from under the yoke of sin is strikingly typified in the going up of Israel from Egypt, and so also was the victory of our Lord over the powers of death and hell. The Exodus should therefore be earnestly remembered by Christian hearts. Did not Moses on the mount of transfiguration speak to our Lord of "the exodus" which he should shortly accomplish at Jerusalem; and is it not written of the hosts above that they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb? Do we not ourselves expect another coming of the Lord, when before his face heaven and earth shall flee away and there shall be no more sea? We join then with the singers around the Passover table and make their Hallel ours, for we too have been led out of bondage and guided like a flock through a desert land, wherein the Lord supplies our wants with heavenly manna and water from the Rock of ages. Praise ye the Lord.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—The cxivth psalm appears to me to be an admirable ode, and I began to turn it into our own language. As I was describing the journey of Israel from Egypt, and added the Divine Presence amongst them, I perceived a beauty in this psalm, which was entirely new to me, and which I was going to lose: and that is, that the poet utterly conceals the presence of God in the beginning of it, and rather lets a possessive pronoun go without a substantive, than he will so much as mention anything of divinity there. "Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion" or kingdom. The reason now seems evident, and this conduct necessary; for, if God had appeared before, there could be no wonder why the mountains should leap and the sea retire; therefore, that this convulsion of nature may be brought in with due surprise, his name is not mentioned till afterwards; and then with a very agreeable turn of thought, God is introduced at once in all his majesty. This is what I have attempted to imitate in a translation without paraphrase, and to preserve what I could of the spirit of the sacred author.

> When Israel, freed from Pharaoh's hand,
> Left the proud tyrant and his land,
> The tribes with cheerful homage own
> Their King, and Judah was his throne.
>
> Across the deep their journey lay,
> The deep divides to make them way;
> The streams of Jordan saw, and fled
> With backward current to their head.

The mountains shook like frightened sheep,
Like lambs the little hillocks leap;
Not Sinai on her base could stand,
Conscious of sovereign power at hand.

What power could make the deep divide?
Make Jordan backward roll his tide?
Why did ye leap, ye little hills?
And whence the fright that Sinai feels?

Let ev'ry mountain, and ev'ry flood,
Retire, and know th' approaching God,
The King of Israel! see him here:
Tremble, thou earth, adore and fear.

He thunders—and all nature mourns;
The rock to standing pools he turns;
Flints spring with fountains at his word,
And fires and seas confess their Lord.

Isaac Watts, in "The Spectator," 1712.

Verse 1.—"*When Israel went out of Egypt.*" Out of the midst of that nation, that is, out of the bowels of the Egyptians, who had, as it were, devoured them; thus the Jew-doctors gloss upon this text.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*Israel went out of Egypt.*" This was an emblem of the Lord's people in effectual vocation, coming out of bondage into liberty, out of darkness into light, out of superstition, and idolatry, and profaneness, to the service of the true God in righteousness and true holiness; and *from a people of strange language* to those that speak the language of Canaan, a pure language, in which they can understand one another when they converse together, either about experience or doctrine; and the manner of their coming out is much the same, by strength of hand, by the power of divine grace, yet willingly and cheerfully, with great riches, the riches of grace, and a title to the riches of glory, and with much spiritual strength; for though weak in themselves, yet they are strong in Christ.—*John Gill.*

Verse 1.—"*The house of Jacob.*" The Israelites though they were a great number when they went forth from Egypt, nevertheless formed one house or family; thus the church at the present time dispersed throughout the whole world is called one house: 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. iii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5: and that because of one faith, one God, one Father, one baptism, Ephes. iv. 5.—*Marloratus.*

Verse 1.—"*A people of strange language.*" When we find in verse 1, as in Psalm lxxxi. 5, Egypt spoken of as a land where the people were of a "*strange tongue,*" it seems likely that the reference is to their being a people who could not *speak of God*, as Israel could; even as Zeph. iii. 9 tells of the "*pure lip,*" viz., the lip that calls on the name of the Lord.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"*A people of strange tongue.*" Mant translates this "*tyrant land,*" and has the following note:—"The Hebrew word here rendered "tyrant," has been supposed to signify "barbarous"; that is, "using a barbarous or foreign language or pronunciation." But, says Parkhurst, the word seems rather to refer to the "violence" of the Egyptians towards the Israelites, or "the barbarity of their behaviour," which was more to the Psalmist's purpose than "the barbarity of their language"; even supposing the reality of the latter in the time of Moses. The epithet "barbarous" would leave the same ambiguity as Parkhurst supposes to belong to the text. Bishop Horsley renders "a tyrannical people."

Verse 1.—"*A people of strange language.*" The strange language is evidently an annoyance. Israel could not feel at home in Egypt.—*Justus Olshausen.*

Verse 2.—"*Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.*" These people were God's *sanctification and dominion*, that is, witnesses of his holy majesty in

adopting them, and of his mighty power in delivering them : or, his *sanctification*, as having his holy priests to govern them in the points of piety ; and *dominion*, as having godly magistrates ordained from above to rule them in matters of policy : or, his *sanctuary*, both actually, because sanctifying him ; and passively, because sanctified of him. . . This one verse expounds and exemplifies two prime petitions of the Lord's Prayer. "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come" : for *Judah* was God's sanctuary, because *hallowing his name ;* and *Israel* his dominion, as desiring his *kingdom to come.* Let every man examine himself by this pattern, whether he be truly the servant of Jesus his Saviour, or the vassal of Satan the destroyer. If any man submit himself willingly to the domineering of the devil, and suffer sin to reign in his mortal members, obeying the lusts thereof, and working all uncleanness even with greediness ; assuredly that man is yet a chapel of Satan, and a slave to sin. On the contrary, whosoever unfeignedly desires that God's kingdom may come, being ever ready to be ruled according to his holy word, acknowledging it a lantern to his feet, and a guide to his paths ; admitting obediently his laws, and submitting himself alway to the same ; what is he, but a citizen of heaven, a subject of God, a saint, a *sanctuary ?—John Boys.*

Verse 2.—"*Judah was his sanctuary,*" etc. Reader, do not fail to remark, when Israel was brought out of Egypt the Lord set up his tabernacle among them, and manifested his presence to them. And what is it now, when the Lord Jesus brings out his people from the Egypt of the world ? Doth he not fulfil that sweet promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" ? Is it not the privilege of his people, to live *to* him, to live *with* him, and to live *upon* him ? Doth he not in every act declare, "I will say, it is my people ; and they shall say, the Lord is my God" ? Matt. xxviii. 20 ; Zech. xiii. 9.—*Robert Hawker.*

Verse 2.—"*Judah was his sanctuary.*" Meaning not the tribe of Judah only, though they in many things had the pre-eminence ; the kingdom belonged to it, the chief ruler being out of it, especially the Messiah ; its standard was pitched and moved first ; it offered first to the service of the Lord ; and the Jews have a tradition, mentioned by Jarchi and Kimchi, that this tribe with its prince at the head of it, went into the Red Sea first ; the others fearing, but afterwards followed, encouraged by their example. In this place all the tribes are meant, the whole body of the people.—*John Gill.*

Verse 2.—One peculiarity of the second verse requires attention. It twice uses the word "*his,*" without naming any one. There are two theories to account for this circumstance. One is that Psalm cxiv. was always sung in immediate connection with cxiii., in which the name of God occurs no less than six times, so that the continuance of the train of thought made a fresh repetition of it here unnecessary. But this view, to be fully consistent with itself, must assume that the two Psalms are really one, with a merely arbitrary division, which does not, on the face of the matter, seem by any means probable, as the scope of thought in the two is perfectly distinct. The other, which is more satisfactory, regards the omission of the Holy Name in this part of the Psalm as a practical artifice to heighten the effect of the answer to the sudden apostrophe in verses five and six. There would be nothing marvellous in the agitation of the sea, and river, and mountains in the presence of God, but it may well appear wonderful till that potent cause is revealed, as it is most forcibly in the dignified words of the seventh verse.—*Ewald and Perowne, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 3.—"*The sea saw it*" : to wit this glorious work of God in bringing his people out of Egypt.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 3.—"*The sea saw it.*" Saw there that "Judah" was "God's sanctuary," "and Israel his dominion," and therefore "*fled*" ; for nothing could be more awful. It was this that *drove Jordan back*, and was an invincible dam to his streams ; God was at the head of that people, and therefore they must

give way to them, must make room for them, they must retire, contrary to their nature, when God speaks the word.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 3.—"*The sea saw it, and fled.*"

> The waves on either side
> Unloose their close embraces, and divide,
> And backwards press, as in some solemn show
> The crowding people do,
> (Though just before no space was seen,)
> To let the admirèd triumph pass between.
> The wondering army saw on either hand,
> The no less wondering waves like rocks of crystal stand.
> They marched betwixt, and boldly trod
> The secret paths of God. *Abraham Cowley*, 1618—1667.

Verse 3.—"*Jordan was driven back.*" And now the glorious day was come when, by a stupendous miracle, Jehovah had determined to show how able he was to remove every obstacle in the way of his people, and to subdue every enemy before their face. By his appointment, the host, amounting probably to two millions-and-a-half of persons (about the same number as had crossed the Red Sea on foot), had removed to the banks of the river three days before, and now in marching array awaited the signal to cross the stream. At any time the passage of the river by such a multitude, with their women and children, their flocks and herds, and all their baggage, would have presented formidable difficulties; but now the channel was filled with a deep and impetuous torrent, which overflowed its banks and spread widely on each side, probably extending nearly a mile in width; while in the very sight of the scene were the Canaanitish hosts, who might be expected to pour out from their gates, and exterminate the invading multitude before they could reach the shore. Yet these difficulties were nothing to Almighty power, and only served to heighten the effect of the stupendous miracle about to be wrought.

By the command of Jehovah, the priests, bearing the ark of the covenant, the sacred symbol of the Divine presence, marched more than half-a-mile in front of the people, who were forbidden to come any nearer to it. Thus it was manifest that Jehovah needed not protection from Israel, but was their guard and guide, since the unarmed priests feared not to separate themselves from the host, and to venture with the ark into the river in the face of their enemies. And thus the army, standing aloof, had a better opportunity of seeing the wondrous results, and of admiring the mighty power of God exerted on their behalf; for no sooner had the feet of the priests touched the brim of the overflowing river, than the swelling waters receded from them; and not only the broad lower valley, but even the deep bed of the stream was presently emptied of water, and its pebbly bottom became dry. The waters which had been in the channel speedily ran off, and were lost in the Dead Sea; whilst those which would naturally have replaced them from above, were miraculously suspended, and accumulated in a glassy heap far above the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan. These places are supposed to have been at least forty miles above the Dead Sea, and may possibly have been much more; so that nearly the whole channel of the Lower Jordan, from a little below the Lake of Tiberias to the Dead Sea, was dry. . . . . What a glorious termination of the long pilgrimage of Israel was this! and how worthy of the power, wisdom, and goodness of their Divine Protector! "The passage of this deep and rapid river," remarks Dr. Hales, "at the most unfavourable season, was more manifestly miraculous, if possible, than that of the Red Sea; because here was no natural agency whatever employed; no mighty wind to sweep a passage, as in the former case; no reflux of the tide, on which minute philosophers might fasten to depreciate the miracle. It seems, therefore, to have been providentially designed to silence cavils respecting the former; and it was done at noon-day, in the face of the sun, and in the presence, we may be sure, of the neighbouring inhabitants, and struck terror into the kings of the Canaanites and Amorites westward of the river."—*Philip Henry Gosse, in* "*Sacred Streams*," 1877.

Verse 3.—"*Jordan was driven back.*" The waters know their Maker: that Jordan which flowed with full streams when Christ went into it to be baptized, now gives way when the same God must pass through it in state: then there was use of his water, now of his sand. I hear no more news of any rod to strike the waters; the presence of the ark of the Lord God, Lord of all the world, is sign enough to these waves, which now, as if a sinew were broken, run back to their issues, and dare not so much as wet the feet of the priests that bare it. How subservient are all the creatures to the God that made them! How glorious a God do we serve; whom all the powers of the heavens and elements are willingly subject unto, and gladly take that nature which he pleaseth to give them.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 3.—"*Jordan was driven back.*" It was probably at the point near the present southern fords, crossed at the time of the Christian era by a bridge. The river was at its usual state of flood at the spring of the year, so as to fill the whole of the bed, up to the margin of the jungle with which the river banks are lined. On the broken edge of the swollen stream, the band of priests stood with the ark on their shoulders. At the distance of nearly a mile in the rear was the mass of the army. Suddenly the full bed of the Jordan was dried before them. High up the river, "far, far away," "in Adam, the city which is beside Zaretan," "as far as the parts of Kirjath-jearim" (Josh. iii. 16), that is, at a distance of thirty miles from the place of the Israelite encampment, the waters there stood which "descended" "from the heights above,"—stood and rose up, as if gathered into a waterskin; as if in a barrier or heap, as if congealed; and those that "descended" towards the sea of "the desert," the Salt Sea, "failed and were cut off." Thus the scene presented is of the "descending stream" (the words employed seem to have a special reference to that peculiar and most significant name of the "Jordan"), not parted asunder, as we generally fancy, but, as the Psalm expresses it, "turned backwards"; the whole bed of the river left dry from north to south, through its long windings; the huge stones lying bare here and there, imbedded in the soft bottom; or the shingly pebbles drifted along the course of the channel.—*Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, in* "*The History of the Jewish Church,*" 1870.

Verse 4.—"*The mountains skipped like rams,*" etc. The figure drawn from the *lambs* and *rams* would appear to be inferior to the magnitude of the subject. But it was the prophet's intention to express in the homeliest way the incredible manner in which God, on these occasions, displayed his power. The stability of the earth being, as it were, founded on the mountains, what connection can they have with rams and lambs, that they should be agitated, skipping hither and thither? In speaking in this homely style, he does not mean to detract from the greatness of the miracle, but more forcibly to engrave these extraordinary tokens of God's power on the illiterate.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*Skipped.*" A poetic description of the concussion caused by the thunder and lightning that accompanied the divine presence.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 4.—At the giving of the law at Sinai, Horeb and the mountains around, both great and small, shook with a sudden and mighty earthquake, like rams leaping in a grassy plain, with the young sheep frisking round them.—*Plain Commentary.*

Verses 4—6.—When Christ descends upon the soul in the work of conversion, what strength doth he put forth! The strongholds of sin are battered down, every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ is brought into captivity to the obedience of his sceptre, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Devils are cast out of the possession which they have kept for many years without the least disturbance. Strong lusts are mortified and the very constitution of the soul is changed. "*What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams?*" etc. The prophet speaks those words of the powerful entrance of the children of Israel

into Canaan. The like is done by Christ in the conversion of a sinner. Jordan is driven back, the whole course of the soul is altered, the mountains skip like rams. There are many mountains in the soul of a sinner, as pride, unbelief, self-conceitedness, atheism, profaneness, etc. These mountains are plucked up by the roots in a moment when Christ begins the work of conversion.—*Ralph Robinson.*

Verse 5.—

Fly where thou wilt, O Sea!
And Jordan's current cease!
Jordan, there is no need of thee,
For at God's word, whene'er he please,
The rocks shall weep new waters forth instead of these.

Abraham Cowley.

Verses 5, 6.—A singular animation and an almost dramatic force are given to the poem by the beautiful apostrophe in verses 5, 6, and the effect of this is heightened in a remarkable degree by the use of the present tenses. The awe and the trembling of nature are a spectacle on which the poet is looking. The parted sea through which Israel walks as on dry land, the rushing Jordan arrested in its course, the granite cliffs of Sinai shaken to their base—he sees it all, and asks in wonder what it means?—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 5, 6.—This questioning teaches us that we should ourselves consider and inquire concerning the reason of those things, which we see to have been done in a wondrous way, out of the course of nature. There are signs in the sun, moon, stars, heaven, &c., concerning which Christ has spoken. Let us inquire the reason why they are, that we be not stupid and inaccurate spectators. The things which are done miraculously do speak: and they can give answer why they are done. Nay, rather, portents, signs, earthquakes, extraordinary appearances are loud-speaking, and they declare from themselves what they are: namely, that they are prophetic of the anger and future vengeance of God. Such inquiry as this is not prying curiosity, but is pious and useful, working to this end, that we become observant of the judgments of God, with which he visits this world, and yield ourselves to his grace, and so we escape the coming vengeance.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verses 5, 6.—

What ails thee, sea, to part,
Thee Jordan, back to start?
Ye mountains, like the rams to leap,
Ye little hills, like sheep?

John Keble.

Verse 7.—"*Tremble, thou earth.*" Hebrew, *Be in pain*, as a travailing woman: for if the giving of the law had such dreadful effects, what should the breaking thereof have?—*John Trapp.*

Verse 7.—

"At the presence of the Lord be in pangs, O earth."

"*Lord,*" *Adon*, the Sovereign Ruler. "Pangs," *Chuli:* Mic. iv. 10. The convulsions of nature, which accompanied the Exodus, were as the birth-throes of the Israelite people. "A nation was born in a day." But the deliverance out of Babylon was the prelude to a far more wondrous truth;—that of him, in whom human nature was to be regenerated.—*William Kay.*

Verses 7, 8.—"*Tremble,*" etc. This is an answer to the preceding question: as if he had said, It is no wonder that Sinai, and Horeb, and a few adjoining hills should thus tremble at the majestic presence of God; for the whole earth must do so, whenever he pleases.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 8.—"*Which turned the rock into a standing water.*" *Into a pool.* The divine poet represents the very substance of the rock as being converted into

water, not literally, but poetically; thus ornamenting his sketch of the wondrous power displayed on this occasion.—*William Walford.*

Verse 8.—The remarkable rock in Sinai which tradition regards as the one which Moses smote, is at least well chosen in regard to its situation, whatever opinion we may form of the truth of that tradition, which it seems to be the disposition of late travellers to regard with more respect than was formerly entertained. It is an isolated mass of granite, nearly twenty feet square and high, with its base concealed in the earth—we are left to conjecture to what depth. In the face of the rock are a number of horizontal fissures, at unequal distances from each other; some near the top, and others at a little distance from the surface of the ground. An American traveller * says: "The colour and whole appearance of the rock are such that, if seen elsewhere, and disconnected from all traditions, no one would hesitate to believe that they had been produced by water flowing from these fissures. I think it would be extremely difficult to form these fissures or produce these appearances by art. It is not less difficult to believe that a natural fountain should flow at the height of a dozen feet out of the face of an isolated rock. Believing, as I do, that the water was brought out of a rock belonging to this mountain, I can see nothing incredible in the opinion that this is the identical rock, and that these fissures, and the other appearances, should be regarded as evidences of the fact."—*John Kitto.*

Verse 8.—Shall *the hard rock be turned into a standing water, and the flint-stone into a springing well?* and shall not our hard and flinty hearts, in consideration of our own miseries, and God's unspeakable mercies in delivering us from evil, (if not gush forth into fountains of tears) express so much as a little *standing water* in our eyes? It is our hard heart indeed, *quod nec compunctione scinditur, nec pietate mollitur, nec movetur precibus, minis non cedit, flagellis duratur,*† *&c.* O Lord, touch thou the mountains and they shall smoke, touch our lips with a coal from thine altar, and our mouth shall show forth thy praise. Smite, Lord, our flinty hearts as hard as the nether millstone, with the hammer of thy word, and mollify them also with the drops of thy mercies and dew of thy Spirit; make them humble, fleshy, flexible, circumcised, soft, obedient, new, clean, broken, and then "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise." Ps. li. 17. "O Lord my God, give me grace from the very bottom of my heart to desire thee; in desiring, to seek thee; in seeking, to find; in finding, to love thee; in loving, utterly to loathe my former wickedness;" that living in thy fear, and dying in thy favour, when I have passed through this Egypt and wilderness of this world, I may possess the heavenly Canaan and happy land of promise, prepared for all such as love thy coming, even for every Christian one, which is thy "*dominion,*" and "*sanctuary.*"‡—*John Boys.*

Verse 8.—The same almighty power that turned waters into a rock to be a wall to Israel (Exod. xiv. 22), turned the rock into waters to be a well to Israel. As they were protected, so they were provided for, by miracles, standing miracles; for such was the standing water, that fountain of waters, into which the rock, the flinty rock, was turned, "and that rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4. For he is a fountain of living waters to his Israel, from whom they receive grace for grace.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 8.—"*The flint into a fountain of waters.*" The causing of water to gush forth out of the flinty rock is a practical proof of unlimited omnipotence and of the grace which converts death into life. Let the earth then tremble before the Lord, the God of Jacob. It has already trembled before him, and before him let it tremble. For that which he has been he still ever is; and as he came once he will come again.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

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* Dr. Olin. † Bernard. ‡ Augustine.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verses 1, 2.—The time of first delivery from sin a season notable for the peculiar presence of God.

Verses 1, 2.—The Lord was to his people—I. A deliverer. II. A priest—"his sanctuary." III. A king—"his dominion."

Verses 1, 7.—"The house of Jacob" and "the God of Jacob," the relation between the two.

Verse 2.—The church the temple of sanctity and the domain of obedience.

Verse 3.—The impenitence of sinners rebuked by the inanimate creation.

Verse 3.—"Jordan was driven back," or death overcome.

Verse 4.—The movableness of things which appear to be fixed and settled. God's power of creating a stir in lethargic minds, among ancient systems, and prejudiced persons of the highest rank.

Verses 7, 8.—Holy awe. I. Should be caused by the fact of the divine presence. Should be increased by his covenant character—"the God of Jacob." III. Should culminate when we see displays of his grace towards his people—"which turned," &c. IV. Should become universal.

Verse 8.—Wonders akin to the miracle at the rock. I. Christ's death the source of life. II. Adversity a means of prosperity. III. Hard hearts made penitent. IV. Barrenness of soul turned into abundance.

Verse 8.—Divine supplies. 1. Sure—for he will fetch them even from a rock. 2. Plentiful—"a mere or standing water." 3. Continual "fountain of waters." 4. Instructive. Should create in us holy awe at the power, &c., of the Lord.

PSALM CXV.

SUBJECT.—*In the former psalm the past wonders which God had wrought were recounted to his honour, and in the present psalm he is entreated to glorify himself again, because the heathen were presuming upon the absence of miracles, were altogether denying the miracles of former ages, and insulting the people of God with the question, "Where is now their God?" It grieved the heart of the godly that Jehovah should be thus dishonoured, and treating their own condition of reproach as unworthy of notice, they beseech the Lord at least to vindicate his own name. The Psalmist is evidently indignant that the worshippers of foolish idols should be able to put such a taunting question to the people who worshipped the only living and true God; and having spent his indignation in sarcasm upon the images and their makers, he proceeds to exhort the house of Israel to trust in God and bless his name. As those who were dead and gone could no longer sing psalms unto the Lord among the sons of men, he exhorts the faithful who were then living to take care that God is not robbed of his praise, and then he closes with an exulting Hallelujah. Should not living men extol the living God?*

DIVISION.—*For the better expounding of it, the psalm may be divided into an entreaty of God to vindicate his own honour, verses* 1, 2; *a contemptuous description of the false gods and their worshippers,* 3—8; *an exhortation to the faithful to trust in God and to expect great blessings from him,* 9—15; *an explanation of God's relationship to their present condition of things, verse* 16, *and a reminder, that, not the dead, but the living, must continually praise God here below,* 17, 18.

EXPOSITION.

NOT unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* now their God?

1. It will be well to remember that this psalm was sung at the Passover, and therefore it bears relationship to the deliverance from Egypt. The burden of it seems to be a prayer that the living God, who had been so glorious at the Red Sea and at the Jordan, should again for his own name's sake display the wonders of his power. "*Not unto us, O* LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*" The people undoubtedly wished for relief from the contemptuous insults of idolaters, but their main desire was that Jehovah himself should no longer be the object of heathen insults. The saddest part of all their trouble was that their God was no longer feared and dreaded by their adversaries. When Israel marched into Canaan, a terror was upon all the people round about, because of Jehovah, the mighty God; but this dread the nations had shaken off since there had been of late no remarkable display of miraculous power. Therefore Israel cried unto her God that he would again make bare his arm as in the day when he cut Rahab and wounded the dragon. The prayer is evidently tinctured with a consciousness of unworthiness; because of their past unfaithfulness they hardly dared to appeal to the covenant, and to ask blessings for themselves, but they fell back upon the honour of the Lord their God—an old style of argument which their great lawgiver, Moses, had used with such effect when he pleaded, "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people." Joshua also used the like argument when he said, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" In such manner also let us pray when no other plea is available because of our sense

of sin; for the Lord is always jealous of his honour, and will work for his name's sake when no other motive will move him.

The repetition of the words, "Not unto us," would seem to indicate a very serious desire to renounce any glory which they might at any time have proudly appropriated to themselves, and it also sets forth the vehemence of their wish that God would at any cost to them magnify his own name. They loathed the idea of seeking their own glory, and rejected the thought with the utmost detestation; again and again disclaiming any self-glorifying motive in their supplication. "*For thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*" These attributes seemed most in jeopardy. How could the heathen think Jehovah to be a merciful God if he gave his people over to the hands of their enemies? How could they believe him to be faithful and true if, after all his solemn covenant engagements, he utterly rejected his chosen nation? God is very jealous of the two glorious attributes of grace and truth, and the plea that these may not be dishonoured has great weight with him. In these times, when the first victories of the gospel are only remembered as histories of a dim and distant past, sceptics are apt to boast that the gospel has lost its youthful strength, and they even presume to cast a slur upon the name of God himself. We may therefore rightly entreat the divine interposition that the apparent blot may be removed from his escutcheon, and that his own word may shine forth gloriously as in the days of old. We may not desire the triumph of our opinions, for our own sakes, or for the honour of a sect, but we may confidently pray for the triumph of truth, that God himself may be honoured.

2. "*Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?*" Or, more literally, "Where, pray, is their God?" Why should the nations be allowed with a sneer of contempt to question the existence, and mercy, and faithfulness of Jehovah? They are always ready to blaspheme; we may well pray that they may not derive a reason for so doing from the course of providence, or the decline of the church. When they see the godly down-trodden while they themselves live at ease, and act the part of persecutors, they are very apt to speak as if they had triumphed over God himself, or as if he had altogether left the field of action and deserted his saints. When the prayers and tears of the godly seem to be unregarded, and their miseries are rather increased than assuaged, then do the wicked multiply their taunts and jeers, and even argue that their own wretched irreligion is better than the faith of Christians, because for the present their condition is so much preferable to that of the afflicted saints. And, truly, this is the very sting of the trials of God's chosen when they see the veracity of the Lord questioned, and the name of God profaned because of their sufferings. If they could hope that some good result would come out of all this they would endure it with patience; but as they are unable to perceive any desirable result consequent thereon, they enquire with holy anxiety, "Wherefore should the heathen be permitted to speak thus?" It is a question to which it would be hard to reply, and yet no doubt there is an answer. Sometimes the nations are permitted thus to blaspheme, in order that they may fill up the measure of their iniquity, and in order that the subsequent interposition of God may be rendered the more illustrious in contrast with their profane boastings. Do they say, "Where is now their God?" They shall know by-and-by, for it is written, "Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries"; they shall know it also when the righteous shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Do they say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" That coming shall be speedy and terrible to them. In our own case, by our own lukewarmness and the neglect of faithful gospel preaching, we have permitted the uprise and spread of modern doubt, and we are bound to confess it with deep sorrow of soul; yet we may not therefore lose heart, but may stilll plead with God to save his own truth and grace from the contempt of men of the world. Our honour and the honour of the church are small matters, but the glory of God is the jewel of the universe, of which all else is but the setting; and we may come to the Lord and plead his jealousy for his name,

being well assured that he will not suffer that name to be dishonoured. Wherefore should the pretended wise men of the period be permitted to say that they doubt the personality of God? Wherefore should they say that answers to prayer are pious delusions, and that the resurrection and the deity of our Lord Jesus are moot points? Wherefore should they be permitted to speak disparagingly of atonement by blood and by price, and reject utterly the doctrine of the wrath of God against sin, even that wrath which burneth for ever and ever? They speak exceeding proudly, and only God can stop their arrogant blusterings: let us by extraordinary intercession prevail upon him to interpose, by giving to his gospel such a triumphant vindication as shall utterly silence the perverse opposition of ungodly men.

3 But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.
4 Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.
5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:
6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:
7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.
8 They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them.

3. "*But our God is in the heavens*"—where he should be; above the reach of mortal sneers, over-hearing all the vain janglings of men, but looking down with silent scorn upon the makers of the babel. Supreme above all opposing powers, the Lord reigneth upon a throne high and lifted up. Incomprehensible in essence, he rises above the loftiest thought of the wise; absolute in will and infinite in power, he is superior to the limitations which belong to earth and time. This God is *our* God, and we are not ashamed to own him, albeit he may not work miracles at the beck and call of every vain-glorious boaster who may choose to challenge him. Once they bade his Son come down from the cross and they would believe in him, now they would have God overstep the ordinary bounds of his providence and come down from heaven to convince them: but other matters occupy his august mind besides the convincement of those who wilfully shut their eyes to the superabundant evidences of his divine power and Godhead, which are all around them. If our God be neither seen nor heard, and is not to be worshipped under any outward symbol, yet is he none the less real and true, for he is where his adversaries can never be—in the heavens, whence he stretches forth his sceptre, and rules with boundless power.

"*He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" Up till this moment his decrees have been fulfilled, and his eternal purposes accomplished; he has not been asleep, nor oblivious of the affairs of men; he has worked, and he has worked effectually, none have been able to thwart, nor even so much as to hinder him. "Whatsoever he hath pleased": however distasteful to his enemies, the Lord has accomplished all his good pleasure without difficulty; even when his adversaries raved and raged against him they have been compelled to carry out his designs against their will. Even proud Pharaoh, when most defiant of the Lord was but as clay upon the potter's wheel, and the Lord's end and design in him were fully answered. We may well endure the jeering question, "Where is now their God?" while we are perfectly sure that his providence is undisturbed, his throne unshaken, and his purposes unchanged. What he hath done he will yet do, his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure, and at the end of the great drama of human history, the omnipotence of God and his immutability

and faithfulness will be more than vindicated to the eternal confusion of his adversaries.

4. "*Their idols are silver and gold,*" mere dead inert matter; at the best only made of precious metal, but that metal quite as powerless as the commonest wood or clay. The value of the idol shows the folly of the maker in wasting his substance, but certainly does not increase the power of the image, since there is no more life in silver and gold than in brass or iron. "*The work of men's hands.*" Inasmuch as the maker is always greater than the thing that he has made, these idols are less to be honoured than the artificers, who fashioned them. How irrational that men should adore that which is less than themselves! How strange that a man should think that he can make a god! Can madness go further? Our God is a spirit, and his hands made the heavens and the earth: well may we worship him, and we need not be disturbed at the sneering question of those who are so insane as to refuse to adore the living God, and yet bow their knees before images of their own carving. We may make an application of all this to the times in which we are now living. The god of modern thought is the creation of the thinker himself, evolved out of his own consciousness, or fashioned according to his own notion of what a god should be. Now, it is evident that such a being is no God. It is impossible that there should be a God at all except the God of revelation. A god who can be fashioned by our own thoughts is no more a God than the image manufactured or produced by our own hands. The true God must of necessity be his own revealer. It is clearly impossible that a being who can be excogitated and comprehended by the reason of man should be the infinite and incomprehensible God. Their idols are blinded reason and diseased thought, the product of men's muddled brains, and they will come to nought.

5. "*They have mouths, but they speak not.*" The idols cannot utter even the faintest sound, they cannot communicate with their worshippers, they can neither promise nor threaten, command nor console, explain the past nor prophesy the future. If they had no mouths they might not be expected to speak, but having mouths and speaking not, they are mere dumb idols, and not worthy to be compared with the Lord God who thundered at Sinai, who in old time spake by his servants the prophets, and whose voice even now breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. "*Eyes have they, but they see not.*" They cannot tell who their worshippers may be or what they offer. Certain idols have had jewels in their eyes more precious than a king's ransom, but they were as blind as the rest of the fraternity. A god who has eyes, and cannot see, is a blind deity; and blindness is a calamity, and not an attribute of godhead. He must be very blind who worships a blind god: we *pity* a blind man, it is strange to *worship* a blind image.

6. "*They have ears, but they hear not.*" The psalmist might have pointed to the monstrous ears with which some heathen deities are disfigured,—truly they *have* ears; but no prayer of their votaries, though shouted by a million voices, can ever be heard by them. How can gold and silver hear, and how can a rational being address petitions to one who cannot even hear his words? "*Noses have they, but they smell not.*" The psalmist seems to heap together these sentences with something of the grim sardonic spirit of Elijah when he said, "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." In sacred scorn he mocks at those who burn sweet spices, and fill their temples with clouds of smoke, all offered to an image whose nose cannot perceive the perfume. He seems to point his finger to every part of the countenance of the image, and thus pours contempt upon the noblest part of the idol, if any part of such a thing can be noble even in the least degree.

7. "*They have hands, but they handle not.*" Looking lower down upon the images, the psalmist says, "They have hands, but they handle not," they cannot receive that which is handed to them, they cannot grasp the sceptre of power or the sword of vengeance, they can neither distribute benefits nor

dispense judgments, and the most trifling act they are utterly unable to perform. An infant's hand excels them in power. "*Feet have they, but they walk not.*" They must be lifted into their places or they would never reach their shrines; they must be fastened in their shrines or they would fall; they must be carried or they could never move; they cannot come to the rescue of their friends, nor escape the iconoclasm of their foes. The meanest insect has more power of locomotion than the greatest heathen god. "*Neither speak they through their throats.*" They cannot even reach so far as the guttural noise of the lowest order of beasts; neither a grunt, nor a growl, nor a groan, nor so much as a mutter, can come from them. Their priests asserted that the images of the gods upon special occasions uttered hollow sounds, but it was a mere pretence, or a crafty artifice: images of gold or silver are incapable of living sounds. Thus has the psalmist surveyed the idol from head to foot, looked in its face, and sounded its throat, and he writes it down as utterly contemptible.

8. "*They that make them are like unto them.*" Those who make such things for worship are as stupid, senseless, and irrational as the figures they construct. So far as any spiritual life, thought, and judgment are concerned, they are rather the images of men than rational beings. The censure is by no means too severe. Who has not found the words leaping to his lips when he has seen the idols of the Romanists? "*So is every one that trusteth in them.*" Those who have sunk so low as to be capable of confiding in idols have reached the extreme of folly, and are worthy of as much contempt as their detestable deities. Luther's hard speeches were well deserved by the Papists; they must be mere dolts to worship the rotten relics which are the objects of their veneration.

The god of modern thought exceedingly resembles the deities described in this psalm. Pantheism is wondrously akin to Polytheism, and yet differs very little from Atheism. The god manufactured by our great thinkers is a mere abstraction: he has no eternal purposes, he does not interpose on the behalf of his people, he cares but very little as to how much man sins, for he has given to the initiated "a larger hope" by which the most incorrigible are to be restored. He is what the last set of critics chooses to make him, he has said what they choose to say, and he will do what they please to prescribe. Let this creed and its devotees alone, and they will work out their own refutation, for as now their god is fashioned like themselves, they will by degrees fashion themselves like their god; and when the principles of justice, law, and order shall have all been effectually sapped we may possibly witness in some form of socialism, similar to that which is so sadly spreading in Germany, a repetition of the evils which have in former ages befallen nations which have refused the living God, and set up gods of their own.

9 O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield,

12 The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless *us;* he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.

13 He will bless them that fear the LORD, *both* small and great.

14 The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

15 Ye *are* blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

9. "*O Israel, trust thou in the* LORD." Whatever others do, let the elect of

heaven keep fast to the God who chose them. Jehovah is the God of Jacob, let his children prove their loyalty to their God by their confidence in him. Whatever our trouble may be, and however fierce the blasphemous language of our enemies, let us not fear nor falter, but confidently rest in him who is able to vindicate his own honour, and protect his own servants. "*He is their help and their shield.*" He is the friend of his servants, both actively and passively, giving them both aid in labour and defence in danger. In the use of the pronoun "their," the psalmist may have spoken to himself, in a sort of soliloquy: he had given the exhortation, "trust in Jehovah," and then he whispers to himself, "They may well do so, for he is at all times the strength and security of his servants."

10. "*O house of Aaron, trust in the* LORD." You who are nearest to him, trust him most; your very calling is connected with his truth and is meant to declare his glory, therefore never entertain a doubt concerning him, but lead the way in holy confidence. The priests were the leaders, teachers, and exemplars of the people, and therefore above all others they should place an unreserved reliance upon Israel's God. The psalmist is glad to add that they did so, for he says, "*He is their help and their shield.*" It is good to exhort those to faith who have faith: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; . . . that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." We may stir up pure minds by way of remembrance, and exhort men to trust in the Lord because we know that they are trusting already.

11. The next verse is of the same tenor—"*Ye that fear the* LORD, *trust in the* LORD," whether belonging to Israel, or to the house of Aaron, or not, all those who reverence Jehovah are permitted and commanded to confide in him. "*He is their help and their shield.*" He does aid and protect all those who worship him in filial fear, to whatever nation they may belong. No doubt these repeated exhortations were rendered necessary by the trying condition in which the children of Israel were found: the sneers of the adversary would assail all the people, they would most bitterly be felt by the priests and ministers, and those who were secret proselytes would groan in secret under the contempt forced upon their religion and their God. All this would be very staggering to faith, and therefore they were bidden again and again and again to trust in Jehovah.

This must have been a very pleasant song to households in Babylon, or far away in Persia, when they met together in the night to eat the Paschal supper in a land which knew them not, where they wept as they remembered Zion. We seem to hear them repeating the three-fold word, "Trust in Jehovah," men and women and little children singing out their scorn of the dominant idolatry, and declaring their adhesion to the one God of Israel. In the same manner in this day of blasphemy and rebuke it becomes us all to abound in testimonies to the truth of God. The sceptic is loud in his unbelief, let us be equally open in the avowal of our faith.

12. "*The* LORD *hath been mindful of us*," or "Jehovah hath remembered us." His past mercies prove that we are on his heart, and though for the present he may afflict us, yet he does not forget us. We have not to put him in remembrance as though he found it hard to recollect his children, but he hath remembered us and therefore he will in future deal well with us. "*He will bless us.*" The word "*us*" is supplied by the translators, and is superfluous, the passage should run, "*He will bless; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.*" The repetition of the word "bless" adds great effect to the passage. The Lord has many blessings, each one worthy to be remembered, he blesses and blesses and blesses again. Where he has once bestowed his favour he continues it; his blessing delights to visit the same house very often and to abide where it has once lodged. Blessing does not impoverish the Lord: he has multiplied his mercies in the past, and he will pour them forth thick and threefold in the future. He will have a general blessing for all who fear him, a peculiar blessing for the whole house of Israel, and a double blessing

for the sons of Aaron. It is his nature to bless, it is his prerogative to bless, it is his glory to bless, it is his delight to bless; he has promised to bless, and therefore be sure of this, that he will bless and bless and bless without ceasing.

13. "*He will bless them that fear the* LORD, *both small and great.*" So long as a man fears the Lord it matters nothing whether he be prince or peasant, patriarch or pauper, God will assuredly bless him. He supplies the want of every living thing, from the leviathan of the sea to the insect upon a leaf, and he will suffer none of the godly to be forgotten, however small their abilities, or mean their position. This is a sweet cordial for those who are little in faith, and own themselves to be mere babes in the family of grace. There is the same blessing for the least saint as for the greatest; yea, if anything, the "small" shall be first; for as the necessity is the more pressing, the supply shall be the more speedy.

14. "*The* LORD *shall increase you more and more, you and your children.*" Just as in Egypt he multiplied the people exceedingly, so will he increase the number of his saints upon the earth; not only shall the faithful be blessed with converts, and so with a spiritual seed; but those who are their spiritual children shall become fruitful also, and thus the multitude of the elect shall be accomplished; God shall increase the people, and shall increase the joy. Even to the end of the ages the race of true believers shall be continued, and shall growingly multiply in number and in power. The first blessing upon mankind was, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"; and it is this blessing which God now pronounces upon them that fear him. Despite the idols of philosophy and sacramentarianism, the truth shall gather its disciples, and fill the land with its defenders.

15. "*Ye are blessed of the* LORD *which made heaven and earth.*" This is another form of the blessing of Melchizedek: "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth"; and upon us through our great Melchizedek this same benediction rests. It is an omnipotent blessing, conveying to us all that an Almighty God can do, whether in heaven or on earth. This fulness is infinite, and the consolation which it brings is unfailing: he that made heaven and earth can give us all things while we dwell below, and bring us safely to his palace above. Happy are the people upon whom such a blessing rests; their portion is infinitely above that of those whose only hope lies in a piece of gilded wood, or an image of sculptured stone.

16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

16. "*The heaven, even the heavens, are the* LORD'S." There he specially reigns, and manifests his greatness and his glory: "*but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*" He hath left the world during the present dispensation in a great measure under the power and will of men, so that things are not here below in the same perfect order as the things which are above. It is true the Lord rules over all things by his providence, but yet he allows and permits men to break his laws and persecute his people for the time being, and to set up their dumb idols in opposition to him. The free agency which he gave to his creatures necessitated that in some degree he should restrain his power and suffer the children of men to follow their own devices; yet nevertheless, since he has not vacated heaven, he is still master of earth, and can at any time gather up all the reins into his own hands. Perhaps, however, the passage is meant to have another meaning, viz., that God will increase his people, because he has given the earth to them, and intends that they shall fill it. Man was constituted originally God's vicegerent over the world, and though as yet we see not all things put under him, we see Jesus exalted on high, and in him the children of men shall receive a loftier dominion even on earth than as yet they have known. "The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves

in the abundance of peace": and our Lord Jesus shall reign amongst his ancients gloriously. All this will reflect the exceeding glory of him who reveals himself personally in heaven, and in the mystical body of Christ below. The earth belongs to the sons of God, and we are bound to subdue it for our Lord Jesus, for he must reign. The Lord hath given him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

17 The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

18 But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

17. "*The dead praise not the* LORD"—so far as this world is concerned. They cannot unite in the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with which the church delights to adore her Lord. The preacher cannot magnify the Lord from his coffin, nor the Christian worker further manifest the power of divine grace by daily activity while he lies in the grave. "*Neither any that go down into silence.*" The tomb sends forth no voice; from mouldering bones and flesh-consuming worms there arises no sound of gospel ministry nor of gracious song. One by one the singers in the consecrated choir of saints steal away from us, and we miss their music. Thank God, they have gone above to swell the harmonies of the skies, but as far as we are concerned, we have need to sing all the more earnestly because so many songsters have left our choirs.

18. "*But we will bless the* LORD *from this time forth and for evermore.*" We who are still living will take care that the praises of God shall not fail among the sons of men. Our afflictions and depressions of spirit shall not cause us to suspend our praises; neither shall old age, and increasing infirmities damp the celestial fires, nay, nor shall even death itself cause us to cease from the delightful occupation. The spiritually dead cannot praise God, but the life within us constrains us to do so. The ungodly may abide in silence, but we will lift up our voices to the praise of Jehovah. Even though for a time he may work no miracle, and we may see no peculiar interposition of his power, yet on the strength of what he has done in ages past we will continue to laud his name "until the day break, and the shadows flee away," when he shall once more shine forth as the sun to gladden the faces of his children. The present time is auspicious for commencing a life of praise, since to-day he bids us hear his voice of mercy. "From this time forth" is the suggestion of wisdom, for this duty ought not to be delayed; and it is the dictate of gratitude, for there are pressing reasons for prompt thankfulness. Once begin praising God and we have entered upon an endless service. Even eternity cannot exhaust the reasons why God should be glorified. "*Praise the* LORD," or Hallelujah. Though the dead cannot, and the wicked will not, and the careless do not praise God, yet we will shout "Hallelujah" for ever and ever. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—Several manuscripts and editions, also the Septuagint, the Syriac, and many of the old translators join this psalm to the preceding, and make one of them. But the argument and the arrangement of the two psalms do not allow of the least doubt as to their original independence of each other. —*Justus Olshausen.*

Verse 1.—"*Not unto us, O* LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*" The psalmist, by this repetition, implies our natural tendency to self-idolatry, and to magnifying of ourselves, and the difficulty of cleansing our hearts from

these self-reflections. If it be angelical to refuse an undue glory stolen from God's throne, Rev. xxii. 8, 9; it is diabolical to accept and cherish it. "To seek our own glory is not glory," Prov. xxv. 27. It is vile, and the dishonour of a creature, who, by the law of his creation, is referred to another end. So much as we sacrifice to our own credit, to the dexterity of our hands, or the sagacity of our wit, we detract from God.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 1.—"*Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory,*" etc. This is not a doxology, or form of thanksgiving, but a prayer. Not for our safety or welfare, so much as for thy glory, be pleased to deliver us. Not to satisfy our revenge upon our adversaries; not for the establishment of our own interest; but for the glory of thy grace and truth do we seek thine aid, that thou mayest be known to be a God keeping covenant; for mercy and truth are the two pillars of that covenant. It is a great dishonouring of God when anything is sought from him more than himself, or not for himself. Saith Austin, it is but a carnal affection in prayer when men seek self more than God. Self and God are the two things that come in competition. Now there are several sorts of self; there is carnal self, natural self, spiritual self, and glorified self; above all these God must have the pre-eminence.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 1.—There are many sweet and precious texts of Scripture which are so endeared, and have become so habituated to us, and we to them, that one cannot but think we must carry them with us to heaven, and that they will form not only the theme of our song, but a portion of our blessedness and joy even in that happy home. . . . But if there be one text which more especially belongs to all, and which must, I think, break forth from *every* redeemed one as he enters heaven, and form the unwearying theme of eternity, it is the first verse of this psalm. I am sure that not one of the Lord's chosen ones on earth, as he reviews the way by which he has been led, as he sees enemy after enemy prostrate before his utter feebleness, and has such thorough evidence and conviction that his weakness is made perfect in the Lord's strength, but must, from the very ground of his heart, say, "*Not unto us, O* LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name*" be the praise and the glory ascribed. And could we see heaven opened—could we hear its glad and glorious hallelujahs—could we see its innumerable company of angels, and its band of glorified saints, as they cast their crowns before the throne, we should hear as the universal chorus from every lip, "*Not unto us, O* LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*" I know not why this should not be as gladly and as gratefully the angels' song as the song of the redeemed: they stand not in their own might nor power,—they kept not their first estate through any inherent strength of their own, but, like their feebler brethren of the human race, are equally "kept by the power of God"; and from their ranks, I doubt not, is re-echoed the same glorious strain, "*Not unto us, O* LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*" Even our blessed Lord, as on that night of sorrow he sung this hymn of praise, could truly say, in that nature which had sinned, and which was to suffer, "Not unto us,"—not unto man, be ascribed the glory of this great salvation, which I am now with my own blood to purchase, but unto thy name and thy love be the praise given.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 1.—"*Non nobis, Domine, sed tibi sit gloria.*" A part of the Latin version of this psalm is frequently sung after grace at public dinners, but why we can hardly imagine, except it be for fear that donors should be proud of the guineas they have promised, or gourmands should be vainglorious under the influence of their mighty feeding.—*C. H. S.*

Verses 1, 2.—He, in a very short space, assigns three reasons why God should seek the glory of his name in preserving his people. First, because he is merciful; secondly, because he is true and faithful in observing his promise; thirdly, that the Gentiles may not see God's people in a state of destitution, and find cause for blaspheming him or them. He therefore says, "*for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake,*" show thy glory, or give glory to thy name, for it is

then thy glory will be exhibited when thou showest mercy to thy people; and then thou wilt have carried out the truth of the promise which thou hast made to our fathers. "*Lest the Gentiles should say, Where is their God?*" lest the incredulous Gentiles should get an occasion of detracting from thy power, and, perhaps, of ignoring thy very existence.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verses 2, 3.—If God be everywhere, why doth Christ teach us to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven"? And when the heathen made that scoffing demand, "*Where is now their God?*" why did David answer, "*Our God is in the heavens*"? To these and all other texts of like import we may answer; *heaven* is not there spoken of as bounding the presence of God, but as guiding the faith and hope of man. "In the morning" (saith David, Ps. v. 3) "will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." When the eye hath no sight of any help on earth, then faith may have the clearest vision of it in heaven. And while God appears so little in any gracious dispensation for his people on earth, that the enemy begins to scoff, "*Where is now their God?*" then his people have recourse by faith to heaven, where the Lord not only is, but is glorious in his appearings. From whence as he the better seeth how it is with us, so he seems to have a position of advantage for relieving us.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 2—8.—Contrast Jehovah with any other God. Why should the heathen say, "*Where, pray,* (נָא) *is your God?*" Take up Moses' brief description in Deut. iv. 28, and expand it as is done here. Idols of gold and silver have a *mouth*, but give no counsel to their worshippers; *eyes*, but see not the devotions nor the wants of those who serve them; *ears*, but hear not their cries of distress or songs of praise; *nostrils*, but smell not the fragrant incense presented to their images; *hands*, but the thunderbolt which they seem to hold (as Jupiter Tonans in after days), is a *brutum fulmen*, they cannot launch it; *feet*, but they cannot move to help the fallen. Ah! they cannot so much as whisper one syllable of response, or even mutter in their throat! And as man becomes like his God, (witness Hindoo idolaters whose cruelty is just the reflection of the cruelty of their gods,) so these gods of the heathen being "soul-less, the worshippers become soul-less themselves" (Tholuck).—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 3—"*And our God* (*is*) *in heaven; all that he pleased he has done.*" The "*and*," though foreign from our idiom, adds sensibly to the force of the expression. They ask thus, as if our God were absent or had no existence; and yet all the while our God is in heaven, in his exalted and glorious dwelling-place.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—It would be folly to assert the like concerning idols; therefore, if the heathen say, *Where is your God?* we reply, *He is in heaven*, &c.: but where are your idols? In the earth, not making the earth, but made from the earth, &c.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 3.—"*But our God is in the heavens.*" When they place God in heaven, they do not confine him to a certain locality, nor set limits to his infinite essence; but on the contrary they deny the limitation of his power, its being shut up to human instrumentality only, or its being subject to fate or fortune. In short, they put the universe under his control; and teach us that, being superior to every obstruction, he does freely everything that may seem good to him. This truth is still more plainly asserted in the subsequent clause, "*he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" God then may be said to dwell in heaven, as the world is subject to his will, and nothing can prevent his accomplishing his purposes.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*Their idols are silver and gold.*" Can there be anything more absurd than to expect assistance from them, since neither the materials of which they are formed, nor the forms which are given them by the hand of men possess the smallest portion of divinity so as to command respect for them?

At the same time, the prophet tacitly indicates that the value of the material does not invest the idols with more excellence, so that they deserve to be more highly esteemed. Hence the passage may be translated adversatively, thus, Though they are of gold and silver, yet they are not gods, because they are the work of men's hands.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*Their idols are silver,*" etc. They are metal, stone, and wood. They are generally made in the form of man, but can neither see, hear, smell, feel, walk, nor speak. How brutish to trust in such! and next to them, in stupidity and inanity, must they be who form them, with the expectation of deriving any good from them. So obviously vain was the whole system of idolatry that the more serious heathens ridiculed it, and it was a butt for the jests of their freethinkers and buffoons. How keen are these words of Juvenal!

> Audis,
> Jupiter, hæc? nec labra moves, cum mittere vocem
> Debueras, vel marmoreus vel aheneus? aut cur
> In carbone tuo charta pia thura soluta
> Ponimus, et sectum vituli jecur, albaque porci
> Omenta? ut video, nullum discrimen habendum est
> Effigies inter vestras, statuamque Bathylli. Sat. xiii., ver. 113.

"Dost thou hear, O Jupiter, these things? nor move thy lips when thou oughtest to speak out, whether thou art of marble or of bronze? Or, why do we put the sacred incense on thy altar from the opened paper, and the extracted liver of a calf, and the white caul of a hog? As far as I can discern, there is no difference between thy statue and that of Bathyllus."

This irony will appear the keener, when it is known that Bathyllus was a fiddler and player, whose image, by the order of Polycrates, was erected in the temple of Juno at Samos.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 4.—"*Idols.*" Idolators plead in behalf of their idols, that they are only intended to represent their gods, and to maintain a more abiding sense of their presence. The Spirit, however, does not allow this plea, and treats their images as the very gods they worship. The gods they profess to represent do not really exist, and therefore their worship is altogether vain and foolish. Must not the same be said of the pretended worship of many in the present day, who would encumber their worship with representative rites and ceremonies, or expressive symbols, or frame to themselves in their imaginations a god other than the God of revelation?—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 4.—"*Silver and gold*"—proper things to make money of, but not to make gods of.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 4.—"*The work of men's hands.*" The following advertisement is copied from a Chinese newspaper:—"Archen Tea Chinchin, sculptor, respectfully acquaints masters of ships, trading from Canton to India, that they may be furnished with figure-heads of any size, according to order, at one-fourth of the price charged in Europe. He also recommends for private venture, the following idols, brass, gold, and silver: the hawk of Vishnoo, which has reliefs of his incarnation in a fish, boar, lion, and turtle. An Egyptian apis, a golden calf and bull, as worshipped by the pious followers of Zoroaster. Two silver mammosits, with golden ear-rings; an aprimanes, for Persian worship; a ram, an alligator, a crab, a laughing hyena, with a variety of household gods on a small scale, calculated for family worship. Eighteen months' credit will be given, or a discount of fifteen per cent. for prompt payment of the sum affixed to each article. Direct, China-street, Canton, under the marble Rhinoceros and Gilt Hydra."—*Arvine's Anecdotes.*

Verse 4.—"*The work of men's hands.*" Works, and not the makers of works.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 4.—"*The work of men's hands.*" And therefore they must needs be goodly gods, when made by bunglers especially, as was the rood of *Cockram;* which if it were not good enough to make a god would make an excellent devil, as the Mayor of Doncaster merrily told the complainants.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 4—7.—A beautiful contrast is formed between the God of Israel and the heathen idols. He made everything, they are themselves made by men; he is in heaven, they are upon earth; he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth, they can do nothing; he seeth the distresses, heareth and answereth the prayers, accepteth the offerings, cometh to the assistance, and effecteth the salvation of his servants; they are blind, deaf, and dumb, senseless, motionless, and impotent. Equally slow to hear, equally impotent to save, in time of greatest need, will every worldly idol prove, on which men have set their affections, and to which they have, in effect, said, "Thou art my God."—*George Horne.*

Verses 4—7.—In Alexandria there was a most famous building called the *Serapion*, a temple of *Serapis*, who presided over the inundations of the Nile, and the fertility of Egypt. It was a vast structure of masonry, crowning a hill in the centre of the city, and was ascended by a hundred steps. It was well fortified and very handsome. The statue of the god was a colossal image, which touched with outstretched hands both sides of the building, while the head reached the lofty roof. It was adorned with rich metals and jewels.

The Emperor Theodosius, having commanded the demolition of the heathen temple, Theophilus, the bishop, attended by the soldiers, hastened to ascend the steps and enter the fane. The sight of the image, for a moment, made even the Christian destructives pause. The bishop ordered a soldier to strike without delay. With a hatchet he smote the statue on the knee. All waited in some emotion, but there was neither sound nor sign of divine anger. The soldiers next climbed to the head and struck it off. It rolled on the ground. A large family of rats, disturbed in their tranquil abode within the sacred image, poured out from the trembling statue and raced over the temple floor. The people now began to laugh, and to destroy with increased zeal. They dragged the fragments of the statue through the streets. Even the Pagans were disgusted with gods who did not defend themselves. The huge edifice was slowly destroyed, and a Christian church was built in its place. There was still some fear among the people that the Nile would show displeasure by refusing its usual inundation. But as the river rose with more than usual fulness and bounty, every anxiety was dispelled.—*Andrew Reed, in "The Story of Christianity,"* 1877.

Verses 4—8.—Theodoret tells us of S. Publia, the aged abbess of a company of nuns at Antioch, who used to chant, as Julian went by in idolatrous procession, the Psalm, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. . . . They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them"; and he narrates how the angry Emperor caused his soldiers to buffet her till she bled, unable as he was to endure the sting of the old Hebrew song. —*Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 5.—"*Mouths, but they speak not.*" The noblest function of the mouth is to speak. Eyes, ears, and nose are the organs of certain senses. The mouth contains the organ of taste, and the hands and feet belong to the organ of touch, but speech is the glory of the mouth.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 6.—"*They have ears, but they hear not.*" But are as deaf as door-nails to the prayers of their suppliants. The Cretians pictured their Jupiter without ears, so little hearing or help they hoped for from him. Socrates, in contempt of heathen gods, swore by an oak, a goat, a dog; as holding these better gods than those.—*John Trapp,*

Verse 7.—"*They have hands, but they handle not.*" Even their artist therefore surpasseth them, since he had the faculty of moulding them by the motion and functions of his limbs; though thou wouldest be ashamed to worship that artist. Even thou surpassest them, though thou hast not made these things, since thou doest what they cannot do.—*Augustine.*

Verse 7.—"*Neither speak they through their throat.*" *Yehgu;* not so much as the low faint moaning of a dove. Isaiah xxxviii. 14.—*William Kay.*

Verse 7.—"*Speak*," or, as the Hebrew word likewise signifies, *breathe*. They are not only irrational, but also inanimate.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 8.—"*They that make them are like unto them.*" They that make them *images*, show their ingenuity, and doubtless are sensible men; but they that make them *gods* show their stupidity, and are as senseless blockish things as the idols themselves.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 8.—"*They that make them are like unto them.*" They are like idols, because, though they hear and see, it is more in appearance than in reality; for they neither see nor hear the things that pertain to salvation, the things that only are worth seeing, so that they may be said more to dream than to see or hear; as St. Mark has it, "Having eyes ye see not, having ears ye hear not."—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 8.—"*Like unto them.*" etc. Every one is just what his God is; whoever serves the Omnipotent is omnipotent with him: whoever exalts feebleness, in stupid delusion, to be his god, is feeble along with that god. This is an important preservative against fear for those who are sure that they worship the true God.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 8.—"*Like unto them.*" Namely, "hollowness," vanity, unprofitableness: (*tohu*). Isaiah xliv. 9, 10.—*William Kay.*

Verse 8.—They that serve a base god cannot but be of a base spirit, and so can do nothing worthily and generously. Every man's temper is as his god is. —*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 9.—"*He is their help.*" We should rather have expected, "Our help and our shield," &c. But the burden thrice introduced, appears to be a well-known formula of praise. "*Their*," *i.e.*, "of all who trust in him." The verses contain a climax: (1) Israel in general is addressed; (2) the priests or ministers of God's service; (3) the true Israelites; not only chosen out of all people, or out of the chosen people for outward service; but serving God in sincerity of heart.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

Verse 10.—"*He is the help*" of his people; they are helpless in themselves, and vain is the help of man, for there is none in him; there is no help but in the Lord, and he is a present, seasonable, and sufficient help. Jehovah the Father has promised them help, and he is both able and faithful to make it good: he has laid help upon his Son for them; and has set up a throne of grace, where they may come for grace to help them in time of need. Christ has helped them out of the miserable estate they were fallen into by sin; he helps them on in their way to heaven, by his power and grace, and at last brings them thither. The Spirit of God helps them to the things of Christ; to many exceeding great and precious promises; and out of many difficulties, snares and temptations; and he helps them in prayer under all their infirmities, and makes intercession for them, according to the will of God; and therefore they should trust in the Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit.—*John Gill.*

Verse 12.—"*The* LORD *hath been mindful of us: he will bless us.*" God hath, and therefore God will, is an ordinary Scripture argument.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 13.—"*He will bless . . . . both small and great.*" Mercy, according to the covenant of grace, giveth the same grounds of faith and hope to everyone within the church; so that whatever of favour is shown to one of God's people, it is of a general use and profit to others. This Scripture sheweth that as the duty of trusting in the Lord is common to all sorts of persons, so the blessing of trust is common, and doth belong to all sorts of believers, small and great. God's Israel consists of several degrees of men. There are magistrates who have their peculiar service; there are ministers who intercede between God and man in things belonging to God; and there are the common sort of them that fear God, and are admitted to the

honour of being his people. Now these have all the same privileges. If God be the help and shield of the one, he will be the help and shield of the other; if he bless the one he will bless the other. Every one that feareth God, and is in the number of the true Israelites, may expect his blessing as well as public persons; the meanest peasant as well as the greatest prince, as they have leave to trust in God, so they may expect his blessing. The reason is that they have all an equal interest in the same God, who is a God of goodness and power, able and willing to relieve all those that trust in him. He is alike affected to all his children, and beareth them the same love.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 13.—He says, "*both small and great,*" by which circumstance he magnifies God's paternal regard the more, showing that he does not overlook even the meanest and the most despised, provided they cordially seek his aid. Now as there is no acceptance of persons before God, our low and abject condition ought to be no obstruction to our drawing near to him, since he so kindly invites to approach him those who appear to be held in no reputation. The repetition of the word "*bless*" is intended to mark the uninterrupted stream of his loving-kindness.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 14.—"*The* LORD *shall increase you,*" etc. This is expressive of the further and increasing blessing of Jehovah on his Israel, upon his ministers, and upon the whole church. They are to be increased in light and knowledge, in gifts and graces, in faith and utterance, in numbers and multitude.—*Samuel Eyles Pierce.*

Verse 14. — The Lord will heap his blessings upon you,
Upon you and your children.

—*William Green, in "A New Translation of the Psalms,"* 1762.

Verse 15.—"*Blessed are ye,*" etc. Ye are the people blessed of old in the person of your father Abraham, by Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, Creator of heaven and earth," Gen. xiv. 19. "*Of Jehovah,*" literally, *to Jehovah,* as an object of benediction to him. Or the Hebrew proposition, as in many other cases, may be simply equivalent to our *by.* The creative character of God is mentioned, as ensuring his ability, no less than his willingness, to bless his people.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 16.—"*The heaven, even the heavens, are the* LORD'S." He demonstrates, that, as God has his dwelling-place in the heavens, he must be independent of all worldly riches; for, assuredly, neither wine, nor corn, nor anything requisite for the support of the present life, is produced there. Consequently, God has every resource in himself. To this circumstance the repetition of the term "*heavens*" refers. *The heavens, the heavens are enough for God;* and as he is superior to all aid, he is to himself instead of a hundred more.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 16.—"*The earth hath he given,*" etc.—This verse is full of beauty, when read in connection with what follows, as a descriptive declaration of the effect of "the regeneration" on this lower scene. For until then, man has rather been given to the earth than the earth to the sons of men. It is but a place of graves, and the day of death seems better than the day of birth, so long as men walk in no brighter light than that of the sun.—*Arthur Pridham.*

Verse 17.—"*The dead praise not the* LORD," etc. David considers not here what men do, or do not, in the next world; but he considers only that in this world he was bound to propagate God's truth, and that he could not do so if God took him away by death. Now there is a double reason given of David's and other holy men's deprecation of death in the Old Testament; one in relation to themselves, *qui promissiones obscuræ,* because Moses had conveyed to those men all God's future blessings, all the joy and glory of heaven, only in the types of earthly things, and said little of the state of the soul after this life.

And therefore the promises belonging to the godly after this life, were not so clear that in the contemplation of them they could deliver themselves confidently into the jaws of death: he that is not fully satisfied of the next world, makes shift to be content with this. The other reason was *quia operarii pauci*, because God had a great harvest in hand, and few labourers in it, they were loth to be taken from the work; and this reason was not in relation to themselves, but to God's church, since they would not be able to do God's cause any more good here. This was the other reason that made those good men so loth to die. *Quid facies nomini tuo?* says Joshua in his prayer to God. If the Canaanites come in to destroy us, and blaspheme thee, what wilt thou do unto thy mighty name? What wilt thou do unto thy glorious church, said the saints of God under the Old Testament, if thou take those men out of the world, whom thou hast chosen, enabled, and qualified, for the edification, sustentation, and propagation of that church? Upon this account David desired to live, not for his own sake, but for God's glory and his church's good; neither of which could be advanced by him when he was dead.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 17.—"*The dead praise not the* LORD," etc. Who are here meant by "*the dead*"? I cannot rest in the view taken by those who consider this verse simply as a plea by those who use it, that they may be saved from death. They are words provided for the church at large, as the subsequent verse proves. By "*the dead*," then, I understand those who descend to the silence of eternal death, who have not praised God, and never can. For them the earth might seem never to have been given.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 17.—"*Into silence.*" Into the grave—the land of silence. Ps. xciv. 17. Nothing is more impressive in regard to the grave than its utter *silence*. Not a voice, not a sound, is heard there,—of birds or men—of song or conversation—of the roaring of the sea, the sighing of the breeze, the fury of the storm, the tumult of battle. Perfect stillness reigns there; and the first sound that shall be heard there will be the archangel's trump.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verses 17, 18.—The *people* of God cannot die, because the *praise* of God would die with them, which would be impossible.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verses 17, 18.—It is not to be overlooked that there do occur, in certain psalms, words which have the appearance of excluding the hope of eternal life.* . . . Yet it is a very significant fact, that in all the psalms in question, there is an earnest solicitude expressed for the glory of God. If death is deprecated, it is in order that the Lord may not lose the glory, nor his church the services which a life prolonged might furnish. This is well exemplified in the hundred and fifteenth, which I the rather cite because, being the sole exception to the rule, that the dark views of death are found in psalms of contrition and deep sorrow; it is the only psalm to which the preceding observations are inapplicable. It is a tranquil hymn of praise.

17. It is not the dead who praise Jah:
Neither any that go down into silence.
18. But WE will bless Jah,
From this time forth and for evermore.
Hallelujah!

The psalm thus closed, was one of the Songs of the Second Temple.

What we hear in it is the voice of the church, rather than of an individual soul. And this may assist us in perceiving its entire harmony with faith in the heavenly glory. It much concerns the honour of God that there be continued, on the earth, a visible church, in which his name may be recorded from generation to generation. That is a work which cannot be performed by the dead. Since, therefore, the uppermost desire of the church ought ever to be that God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom advanced, and his will done in the earth; it is her duty to pray for continued subsistence here, on the earth, to witness for God. And it is to be carefully observed, that not only in this passage, but

* Psalm vi. 5, xxx. 9, lxxxviii. 10, 12, lxxxix. 47, cxv. 17.

in all the parallel texts in which the psalmists seem to speak doubtfully or disparagingly of the state of the departed, it is in connection with the interest of God's cause on the earth. The thought that is uppermost in their hearts is, that "in death there is no commemoration" of God—no recording of his name for the salvation of men. This single circumstance might, I think, suffice to put the reader on his guard against a precipitate fastening on them of a meaning which would exclude the hope of eternal life. It goes far to show that what the psalmist deprecates, is not death simply considered, but premature death. Their prayer is, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." Ps. cii. 24. And I do not hesitate to say that there are men so placed in stations of eminent usefulness, that it is their duty to make the prayer their own.—*William Binnie.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The passage may be used as, I. A powerful plea in prayer. II. An expression of the true spirit of piety. III. A safe guide in theology. IV. A practical direction in choosing our way of life. V. An acceptable spirit when surveying past or present success.

Verse 1.—I. No praise is due to man. Have we a being? Not unto us, &c. Have we health? Not unto us, &c. Have we outward comforts? Not unto us, &c. Friends? Not unto us, &c. The means of grace? Not unto us, &c. Saving faith in Christ? Not unto us, &c. Gifts and graces? Not unto us, &c. The hope of glory? Not unto us, &c. Usefulness to others? Not unto us, &c. II. All praise is due to God. 1. Because all we have is from mercy. 2. Because all we expect is from faithfulness.—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—A taunting question, to which we can give many satisfactory replies.

Verse 2.—Why do they say so? Why doth God permit them to say so?—*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 2, 3.—I. The inquiry of heathens: ver. 2. 1. Of ignorance. They see a temple but no god. 2. Of reproach to the people of God when their God has forsaken them for a time: "While they say daily unto me, where," &c. II. The reply to their inquiry: ver. 3. Do you ask where is our God? Ask rather where he is not? Do you ask what he has done? "He has done whatsoever he hath pleased."—*G. R.*

Verse 3.—I. His position betokens absolute dominion. II. His actions prove it. III. Yet he condescends to be "our God."

Verse 3 (*second clause*).—The sovereignty of God. Establish and improve the great scriptural doctrine, that the glorious God has a right to exercise dominion over all his creatures; and to do, in all respects, as he pleases. This right naturally results from his being the *Former* and the *Possessor* of heaven and earth. Consider (1) He is infinitely wise; he perfectly knows all his creatures, all their actions, and all their tendencies. (2) He is infinitely righteous. (3) He is infinitely good.—*George Burder.*

Verses 4—8.—I. The character of idol gods. Whether our gods are natural objects or riches or worldly pleasures, they have no eye to pity, no ear to hear petitions, no tongue to counsel, no hand to help. II. The character of the true God. He is all eye, all ear, all tongue, all hand, all feet, all mind, all heart. III. The character of the idol worshippers. All become naturally assimilated to the objects of their worship.

Verse 8.—The likeness between idolaters and their idols. Work it out in the particulars mentioned.

Verse 9.—The living God claims spiritual worship; the life of such worship is faith; faith proves God to be a living reality—"He is their help," &c. Only elect Israel will ever render this living worship.

Verses 9—11.—I. The reproof. "O Israel!" "O house of Aaron!" "Ye who fear the Lord." Have you been unbelieving towards your God? II. The correction or admonition. "Trust in the Lord." Have you trusted in the true God as others have in their false gods? III. The instruction. "He is their help," &c. Let churches, ministers, and all who fear God know that at all times and under all circumstances he is their help and their shield.—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—I. Those who publicly serve should specially trust. "O house of Aaron, trust." II. Those who are specially called shall be specially helped. "He is their help." III. Those who are specially helped in service may be sure of special protection in danger—"and their shield."

Verse 11.—Filial fear the foundation of fuller faith.

Verse 12.—What we have experienced. What we may expect.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 12, 13.—I. What God *has done* for his people: "He hath been mindful of us." 1. Our preservation proves this. 2. Our mercies. 3. Our trials. 4. Our guidance. 5. Our consolations. Everything, even the minutest blessing, represents a thought in the mind of God respecting us. "How precious are thy thoughts concerning me, O God, how great," &c., and those thoughts go back to an eternity before we came into being. "The Lord hath been mindful of us"; then should we not be more mindful of him? II. What he *will do* for his people—"He will bless us." 1. Greatly. His blessings are like himself, great. They are blessed whom he blesses. 2. Suitably. The house of Israel, the house of Aaron, all who fear him, according to their need, both small and great. 3. Assuredly. "He will," "he will," "he will," "he will." With one "will" he curses, with four "wills" he blesses.—*G. R.*

Verse 13.—I. The general character—"fear the Lord." II. The degrees of development—"small and great." III. The common blessing.

Verse 14.—I. Gracious increase—in knowledge, love, power, holiness, usefulness, &c. II. Growing increase—we grow faster, and advance not only more, but more and more. III. Relative increase—our children grow in grace through our example, &c.

Verse 14.—The blessings of God are, I. *Ever-flowing*—"more and more." II. *Over-flowing*—"you and your children." Let parents seek more grace for themselves for the sake of their children. 1. That they may be more influenced by their example. 2. That their prayers may be more prevalent on their behalf. 3. That their children may be more blessed for their sakes.—*G. R.*

Verse 15.—A blessing. I. Belonging to a peculiar people—"ye." II. Coming from a peculiar quarter—"of the Lord," &c. III. Bearing a peculiar date—"are." IV. Stamped with peculiar certainty—"Ye are blessed." V. Involving a peculiar duty—"Bless the Lord now and evermore."

Verse 15.—The Creator's blessing—its greatness, fulness, variety, &c.

Verse 16.—Man's lordship over the world, its limit, its abuse, its legitimate bound, its grand design.

Verses 17, 18.—I. Missing voices—"The dead praise not." II. Their stimulus upon ourselves—"But we." III. Their cry to others—"Praise ye the Lord." Let us make up for the silent voices.

Verses 17, 18.—I. They who do not praise God here will not praise him hereafter. No reprieve therefore from punishment. II. They who praise God in this life will praise him for evermore. Hallelujah for this. "Praise the Lord."—*G. R.*

Verses 17, 18.—A new year's sermon. I. A mournful memory—"the dead." II. A happy resolve—"but we will bless the Lord." III. An appropriate commencement—"from this time forth." IV. An everlasting continuance—"and for evermore."

PSALM CXVI.

SUBJECT.—*This is a continuation of the Paschal Hallel, and therefore must in some measure be interpreted in connection with the coming out of Egypt. It has all the appearance of being a personal song in which the believing soul, reminded by the Passover of its own bondage and deliverance, speaks thereof with gratitude, and praises the Lord accordingly. We can conceive the Israelite with a staff in his hand singing, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul," as he remembered the going back of the house of Jacob to the land of their fathers; and then drinking the cup at the feast using the words of the thirteenth verse, "I will take the cup of salvation." The pious man evidently remembers both his own deliverance and that of his people as he sings in the language of the sixteenth verse, "Thou hast loosed my bonds"; but he rises into sympathy with his nation as he thinks of the courts of the Lord's house and of the glorious city, and pledges himself to sing "in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem." Personal love fostered by a personal experience of redemption is the theme of this psalm, and in it we see the redeemed answered when they pray, preserved in time of trouble, resting in their God, walking at large, sensible of their obligations, conscious that they are not their own but bought with a price, and joining with all the ransomed company to sing hallelujahs unto God.*

Since our divine Master sang this hymn, we can hardly err in seeing here words to which he could set his seal,—words in a measure descriptive of his own experience; but upon this we will not enlarge, as in the notes we have indicated how the psalm has been understood by those who love to find their Lord in every line.

DIVISION.—*David Dickson has a somewhat singular division of this psalm, which strikes us as being exceedingly suggestive. He says, "This Psalm is a threefold engagement of the Psalmist unto thanksgiving unto God, for his mercy unto him, and in particular for some notable delivery of him from death, both bodily and spiritual. The first engagement is, that he shall out of love have recourse unto God by prayer, verses* 1 *and* 2; *the reasons and motives whereof are set down, because of his former deliverances,* 3—8; *the second engagement is to a holy conversation, verse* 9; *and the motives and reasons are given in verses* 10 *to* 13; *the third engagement is to continual praise and service, and specially to pay those vows before the church, which he had made in days of sorrow, the reasons whereof are given in verses* 14—19."

EXPOSITION.

I LOVE the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.

1. "*I love the* LORD." A blessed declaration: every believer ought to be able to declare without the slightest hesitation, "I love the Lord." It was required under the law, but was never produced in the heart of man except by the grace of God, and upon gospel principles. It is a great thing to say "I love the Lord"; for the sweetest of all graces and the surest of all evidences of salvation is love. It is great goodness on the part of God that he condescends to be loved by such poor creatures as we are, and it is a sure proof that he has been at work in our heart when we can say, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." "*Because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*" The psalmist not only knows that he loves God, but he knows why he does so. When love can justify itself with a reason, it is deep, strong, and abiding. They say that love is blind; but when we love God our affection has its eyes open and can sustain itself with the most rigid logic. We have reason, superabundant reason, for loving the Lord; and so because in this case principle and passion, reason and emotion go together, they make up an admirable state of mind. David's reason for his love was the love of God in hearing his prayers. The psalmist had used his "*voice*" in prayer, and the habit of doing so is exceedingly helpful to devotion. If we can pray aloud without being overheard it is well to do so. Sometimes, however, when the psalmist had lifted up his voice, his utterance had been so broken and painful that he scarcely dared to call it prayer; words failed him, he could only produce a groaning sound, but the Lord heard his moaning voice. At other times his prayers were more regular and better formed: these he calls "*supplications.*" David had praised as best he could, and when one form of devotion failed him he tried another. He had gone to the Lord again and again, hence he uses the plural and says "my supplications," but as often as he had gone, so often had he been welcome. Jehovah had heard, that is to say, accepted, and answered both his broken cries and his more composed and orderly supplications; hence he loved God with all his heart. Answered prayers are silken bonds which bind our hearts to God. When a man's prayers are answered, love is the natural result. According to Alexander, both verbs may be translated in the present, and the text may run thus, "I love because Jehovah hears my voice, my supplications." This also is true in the case of every pleading believer. Continual love flows out of daily answers to prayer.

2. "*Because he hath inclined his ear unto me*":—bowing down from his grandeur to attend to my prayer; the figure seems to be that of a tender physician or loving friend leaning over a sick man whose voice is faint and scarcely audible, so as to catch every accent and whisper. When our prayer is very feeble, so that we ourselves can scarcely hear it, and question whether we do pray or not, yet God bows a listening ear, and regards our supplications. "*Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live,*" or "in my days." Throughout all the days of my life I will address my prayer to God alone, and to him I will unceasingly pray. It is always wise to go where we are welcome and are well treated. The word "call" may imply praise as well as prayer: calling upon the name of the Lord is an expressive name for adoration of all kinds. When prayer is heard in our feebleness, and answered in the strength and greatness of God, we are strengthened in the habit of prayer, and confirmed in the resolve to make ceaseless intercession. We should not thank a beggar who informed us that because we had granted his request he would never cease to beg of us, and yet doubtless it is acceptable to God that his petitioners should form the resolution to continue in prayer: this shows the greatness of his goodness, and the abundance of his patience. In all days let us pray and praise the Ancient of days. He promises that as our days our strength shall be; let us resolve that as our days our devotion shall be.

3. The psalmist now goes on to describe his condition at the time when he prayed unto God. "*The sorrows of death compassed me.*" As hunters surround a stag with dogs and men, so that no way of escape is left, so was David enclosed in a ring of deadly griefs. The bands of sorrow, weakness, and

terror with which death is accustomed to bind men ere he drags them away to their long captivity were all around him. Nor were these things around him in a distant circle, they had come close home, for he adds, "*and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.*" Horrors such as those which torment the lost seized me, grasped me, found me out, searched me through and through, and held me a prisoner. He means by the pains of hell those pangs which belong to death, those terrors which are connected with the grave; these were so closely upon him that they fixed their teeth in him as hounds seize their prey. "*I found trouble and sorrow*"—trouble was around me, and sorrow within me. His griefs were double, and as he searched into them they increased. A man rejoices when he finds a hid treasure; but what must be the anguish of a man who finds, where he least expected it, a vein of trouble and sorrow? The psalmist was sought for by trouble and it found him out, and when he himself became a seeker he found no relief, but double distress.

4. "*Then I called upon the name of the* LORD." Prayer is never out of season, he prayed *then*, when things were at their worst. When the good man could not run to God, he *called* to him. In his extremity his faith came to the front: it was useless to call on man, and it may have seemed almost as useless to appeal to the Lord; but yet he did with his whole soul invoke all the attributes which make up the sacred name of Jehovah, and thus he proved the truth of his confidence. We can some of us remember certain very special times of trial of which we can now say, "*then* called I upon the name of the Lord." The psalmist appealed to the Lord's mercy, truth, power, and faithfulness, and this was his prayer,—"*O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*" This form of petition is short, comprehensive, to the point, humble, and earnest. It were well if all our prayers were moulded upon this model; perhaps they would be if we were in similar circumstances to those of the psalmist, for real trouble produces real prayer. Here we have no multiplicity of words, and no fine arrangement of sentences; everything is simple and natural; there is not a redundant syllable, and yet there is not one lacking.

5. "*Gracious is the Lord, and righteous.*" In hearing prayer the grace and righteousness of Jehovah are both conspicuous. It is a great favour to hear a sinner's prayer, and yet since the Lord has promised to do so, he is not unrighteous to forget his promise and disregard the cries of his people. The combination of grace and righteousness in the dealings of God with his servants can only be explained by remembering the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the cross we see how gracious is the Lord and righteous. "*Yea, our God is merciful,*" or compassionate, tender, pitiful, full of mercy. We who have accepted him as ours have no doubt as to his mercy, for he would never have been our God if he had not been merciful. See how the attribute of righteousness seems to stand between two guards of love:—gracious, *righteous*, merciful. The sword of justice is scarbarded in a jewelled sheath of grace.

6. "*The* LORD *preserveth the simple.*" Those who have a great deal of wit may take care of themselves. Those who have no worldly craft and subtlety and guile, but simply trust in God, and do the right, may depend upon it that God's care shall be over them. The worldly-wise with all their prudence shall be taken in their own craftiness, but those who walk in their integrity with single-minded truthfulness before God shall be protected against the wiles of their enemies, and enabled to outlive their foes. Though the saints are like sheep in the midst of wolves, and comparatively defenceless, yet there are more sheep in the world than wolves, and it is highly probable that the sheep will feed in safety when not a single wolf is left upon the face of the earth: even so the meek shall inherit the earth when the wicked shall be no more. "*I was brought low, and he helped me,*"—simple though I was, the Lord did not pass me by. Though reduced in circumstances, slandered in character, depressed in spirit, and sick in body, the Lord helped me. There are many ways in which the child of God may be brought low, but the help of God

is as various as the need of his people: he supplies our necessities when impoverished, restores our character when maligned, raises up friends for us when deserted, comforts us when desponding, and heals our diseases when we are sick. There are thousands in the church of God at this time who can each one of them say for himself, "*I* was brought low, and he helped *me*." Whenever this can be said it should be said to the praise of the glory of his grace, and for the comforting of others who may pass through the like ordeal. Note how David after stating the general doctrine that the Lord preserveth the simple, proves and illustrates it from his own personal experience. The habit of taking home a general truth and testing the power of it in our own case is an exceedingly blessed one; it is the way in which the testimony of Christ is confirmed in us, and so we become witnesses unto the Lord our God.

7. "*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*" He calls the rest still his own, and feels full liberty to return to it. What a mercy it is that even if our soul has left its rest for a while we can tell it—"it is thy rest still." The psalmist had evidently been somewhat disturbed in mind, his troubles had ruffled his spirit; but now with a sense of answered prayer upon him he quiets his soul. He had rested before, for he knew the blessed repose of faith, and therefore he returns to the God who had been the refuge of his soul in former days. Even as a bird flies to its nest, so does his soul fly to his God. Whenever a child of God even for a moment loses his peace of mind, he should be concerned to find it again, not by seeking it in the world or in his own experience, but in the Lord alone. When the believer prays, and the Lord inclines his ear, the road to the old rest is before him, let him not be slow to follow it. "*For the* LORD *hath dealt bountifully with thee.*" Thou hast served a good God, and built upon a sure foundation; go not about to find any other rest, but come back to him who in former days hath condescended to enrich thee by his love. What a text is this! and what an exposition of it is furnished by the biography of every believing man and woman! The Lord hath dealt bountifully with us, for he hath given us his Son, and in him he hath given us all things: he hath sent us his Spirit, and by him he conveys to us all spiritual blessings. God dealeth with us like a God; he lays his fulness open to us, and of that fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. We have sat at no niggard's table, we have been clothed by no penurious hand, we have been equipped by no grudging provider; let us come back to him who has treated us with such exceeding kindness. More arguments follow.

8. "*For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*" The triune God has given us a trinity of deliverances: our life has been spared from the grave, our heart has been uplifted from its griefs, and our course in life has been preserved from dishonour. We ought not to be satisfied unless we are conscious of all three of these deliverances. If our soul has been saved from death, why do we weep? What cause for sorrow remains? Whence those tears? And if our tears have been wiped away, can we endure to fall again into sin? Let us not rest unless with steady feet we pursue the path of the upright, escaping every snare and shunning every stumblingblock. Salvation, joy, and holiness must go together, and they are all provided for us in the covenant of grace. Death is vanquished, tears are dried, and fears are banished when the Lord is near.

Thus has the psalmist explained the reasons of his resolution to call upon God as long as he lived, and none can question but that he had come to a most justifiable resolve. When from so great a depth he had been uplifted by so special an interposition of God, he was undoubtedly bound to be for ever the hearty worshipper of Jehovah, to whom he owed so much. Do we not all feel the force of the reasoning, and will we not carry out the conclusion? May God the Holy Spirit help us so to pray without ceasing and in everything to give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.

9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

11 I said in my haste, All men *are* liars.

12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

9. "*I will walk before the* LORD *in the land of the living.*" This is the psalmist's second resolution, to live as in the sight of God in the midst of the sons of men. By a man's walk is understood his way of life: some men live only as in the sight of their fellow men, having regard to human judgment and opinion; but the truly gracious man considers the presence of God, and acts under the influence of his all-observing eye. "Thou God seest me" is a far better influence than "My master sees me." The life of faith, hope, holy fear, and true holiness is produced by a sense of living and walking before the Lord, and he who has been favoured with divine deliverances in answer to prayer finds his own experience the best reason for a holy life, and the best assistance to his endeavours. We know that God in a special manner is nigh unto his people: what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

10. "*I believed, therefore have I spoken.*" I could not have spoken thus if it had not been for my faith: I should never have spoken unto God in prayer, nor have been able now to speak to my fellow men in testimony if it had not been that faith kept me alive, and brought me a deliverance, whereof I have good reason to boast. Concerning the things of God no man should speak unless he believes; the speech of the waverer is mischievous, but the tongue of the believer is profitable; the most powerful speech which has ever been uttered by the lip of man has emanated from a heart fully persuaded of the truth of God. Not only the psalmist, but such men as Luther, and Calvin, and other great witnesses for the faith could each one most heartily say, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." "*I was greatly afflicted.*" There was no mistake about that; the affliction was as bitter and as terrible as it well could be, and since I have been delivered from it, I am sure that the deliverance is no fanatical delusion, but a self-evident fact; therefore am I the more resolved to speak to the honour of God. Though greatly afflicted, the psalmist had not ceased to believe: his faith was tried but not destroyed.

11. "*I said in my haste, All men are liars.*" In a modified sense the expression will bear justification, even though hastily uttered, for all men will prove to be liars if we unduly trust in them; some from want of truthfulness, and others from want of power. But from the expression, "I said in my haste," it is clear that the psalmist did not justify his own language, but considered it as the ebullition of a hasty temper. In the sense in which he spoke his language was unjustifiable. He had no right to distrust all men, for many of them are honest, truthful, and conscientious; there are faithful friends and loyal adherents yet alive; and if sometimes they disappoint us, we ought not to call them liars for failing when the failure arises entirely from want of power, and not from lack of will. Under great affliction our temptation will be to form hasty judgments of our fellow men, and knowing this to be the case we ought carefully to watch our spirit, and to keep the door of our lips. The psalmist had believed, and therefore he spoke; he had doubted, and therefore he spoke in haste. He believed, and therefore he rightly prayed to God; he disbelieved, and therefore he wrongfully accused mankind. Speaking is as ill in some cases as it is good in others. Speaking in haste is generally followed by bitter repentance. It is much better to be quiet when our spirit is disturbed and hasty, for it is so much easier to say than to unsay; we may repent of our words, but we cannot so recall them as to undo the mischief they have done.

If even David had to eat his own words, when he spoke in a hurry, none of us can trust our tongue without a bridle.

12. "*What shall I render unto the* LORD *for all his benefits toward me?*" He wisely leaves off fretting about man's falsehood and his own ill humour, and directs himself to his God. It is of little use to be harping on the string of man's imperfection and deceitfulness; it is infinitely better to praise the perfection and faithfulness of God. The question of the verse is a very proper one: the Lord has rendered so much mercy to us that we ought to look about us, and look within us, and see what can be done by us to manifest our gratitude. We ought not only to do what is plainly before us, but also with holy ingenuity to search out various ways by which we may render fresh praises unto our God. His benefits are so many that we cannot number them, and our ways of acknowledging his bestowments ought to be varied and numerous in proportion. Each person should have his own peculiar mode of expressing gratitude. The Lord sends each one a special benefit, let each one enquire, "What shall *I* render? What form of service would be most becoming in me?"

13. "*I will take the cup of salvation.*" "I will take" is a strange answer to the question, "What shall I render?" and yet it is the wisest reply that could possibly be given.

> "The best return for one like me,
> So wretched and so poor,
> Is from his gifts to draw a plea
> And ask him still for more."

To take the cup of salvation was in itself an act of worship, and it was accompanied with other forms of adoration, hence the psalmist says, "*and call upon the name of the* LORD." He means that he will utter blessings and thanksgivings and prayers, and then drink of the cup which the Lord had filled with his saving grace. What a cup this is! Upon the table of infinite love stands the cup full of blessing; it is ours by faith to take it in our hand, make it our own, and partake of it, and then with joyful hearts to laud and magnify the gracious One who has filled it for our sakes that we may drink and be refreshed. We can do this figuratively at the sacramental table, we can do it spiritually every time we grasp the golden chalice of the covenant, realizing the fulness of blessing which it contains, and by faith receiving its divine contents into our inmost soul. Beloved reader, let us pause here and take a long and deep draught from the cup which Jesus filled, and then with devout hearts let us worship God.

14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant: I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

19 In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

14. "*I will pay my vows unto the* LORD *now in the presence of all his people.*" The psalmist has already stated his third resolution, to devote himself to the worship of God evermore, and here he commences the performance of that resolve. The vows which he had made in anguish, he now determines to fulfil:

"I will pay my vows unto the Lord." He does so at once, "*now*," and that publicly, "in the presence of all his people." Good resolutions cannot be carried out too speedily; vows become debts, and debts should be paid. It is well to have witnesses to the payment of just debts, and we need not be ashamed to have witnesses to the fulfilling of holy vows, for this will show that we are not ashamed of our Lord, and it may be a great benefit to those who look on and hear us publicly sounding forth the praises of our prayer-hearing God. How can those do this who have never with their mouth confessed their Saviour? O secret disciples, what say you to this verse! Be encouraged to come into the light and own your Redeemer. If, indeed, you have been saved, come forward and declare it in his own appointed way.

15. "*Precious in the sight of the* LORD *is the death of his saints*," and therefore he did not suffer the psalmist to die, but delivered his soul from death. This seems to indicate that the song was meant to remind Jewish families of the mercies received by any one of the household, supposing him to have been sore sick and to have been restored to health, for the Lord values the lives of his saints, and often spares them where others perish. They shall not die prematurely; they shall be immortal till their work is done; and when their time shall come to die, then their deaths shall be precious. The Lord watches over their dying beds, smooths their pillows, sustains their hearts, and receives their souls. Those who are redeemed with precious blood are so dear to God that even their deaths are precious to him. The death-beds of saints are very precious to the church, she often learns much from them; they are very precious to all believers, who delight to treasure up the last words of the departed; but they are most of all precious to the Lord Jehovah himself, who views the triumphant deaths of his gracious ones with sacred delight. If we have walked before him in the land of the living, we need not fear to die before him when the hour of our departure is at hand.

16. The man of God in paying his vows re-dedicates himself unto God; the offering which he brings is himself, as he cries, "*O* LORD, *truly I am thy servant*, rightfully, really, heartily, constantly, I own that I am thine, for thou hast delivered and redeemed me." "*I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid*," a servant born in thy house, born of a servant and so born a servant, and therefore doubly thine. My mother was thine handmaid, and I, her son, confess that I am altogether thine by claims arising out of my birth. O that children of godly parents would thus judge; but, alas, there are many who are the sons of the Lord's handmaids, but they are not themselves his servants. They give sad proof that grace does not run in the blood. David's mother was evidently a gracious woman, and he is glad to remember that fact, and to see in it a fresh obligation to devote himself to God. "*Thou hast loosed my bonds*,"—freedom from bondage binds me to thy service. He who is loosed from the bonds of sin, death, and hell should rejoice to wear the easy yoke of the great Deliverer. Note how the sweet singer delights to dwell upon his belonging to the Lord; it is evidently his glory, a thing of which he is proud, a matter which causes him intense satisfaction. Verily, it ought to create rapture in our souls if we are able to call Jesus Master, and are acknowledged by him as his servants.

17. "*I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving*." Being thy servant, I am bound to sacrifice to thee, and having received spiritual blessings at thy hands I will not bring bullock or goat, but I will bring that which is more suitable, namely, the thanksgiving of my heart. My inmost soul shall adore thee in gratitude. "*And will call upon the name of the* LORD," that is to say, I will bow before thee reverently, lift up my heart in love to thee, think upon thy character, and adore thee as thou dost reveal thyself. He is fond of this occupation, and several times in this psalm declares that "he will call upon the name of the Lord," while at the same time he rejoices that he had done so many a time before. Good feelings and actions bear repeating: the more of hearty callings upon God the better.

18. "*I will pay my vows unto the* LORD *now in the presence of all his people.*" He repeats the declaration. A good thing is worth saying twice. He thus stirs himself up to greater heartiness, earnestness, and diligence in keeping his vow, —really paying it at the very moment that he is declaring his resolution to do so. The mercy came in secret, but the praise is rendered in public ; the company was, however, select ; he did not cast his pearls before swine, but delivered his testimony before those who could understand and appreciate it.

19. "*In the courts of the* LORD'S *house*" : in the proper place, where God had ordained that he should be worshipped. See how he is stirred up at the remembrance of the house of the Lord, and must needs speak of the holy city with a note of joyful exclamation—"*In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.*" The very thought of the beloved Zion touched his heart, and he writes as if he were actually addressing Jerusalem, whose name was dear to him. There would he pay his vows, in the abode of fellowship, in the very heart of Judea, in the place to which the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord. There is nothing like witnessing for Jesus, where the report thereof will be carried into a thousand homes. God's praise is not to be confined to a closet, nor his name to be whispered in holes and corners, as if we were afraid that men should hear us ; but in the thick of the throng, and in the very centre of assemblies, we should lift up heart and voice unto the Lord, and invite others to join with us in adoring him, saying, "*Praise ye the* LORD," or Hallelujah. This was a very fit conclusion of a song to be sung when all the people were gathered together at Jerusalem to keep the feast. God's Spirit moved the writers of these Psalms to give them a fitness and suitability which was more evident in their own day than now ; but enough is perceptible to convince us that every line and word had a peculiar adaptation to the occasions for which the sacred sonnets were composed. When we worship the Lord we ought with great care to select the words of prayer and praise, and not to trust to the opening of a hymn-book, or to the unconsidered extemporizing of the moment. Let all things be done decently and in order, and let all things begin and end with Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—A Psalm of Thanksgiving in the Person of Christ. He is imagined by the prophet to have passed through the sorrows and afflictions of life. The atonement is passed. He has risen from the dead. He is on the right hand of the Majesty on High ; and he proclaims to the whole world the mercies he experienced from God in the day of his incarnation, and the glories which he has received in the kingdom of his Heavenly Father. Yet, although the psalm possesses this power, and, by its own internal evidence, proves the soundness of the interpretation, it is yet highly mystic in its mode of disclosure, and requires careful meditation in bringing out its real results. Its language, too, is not so exclusively appropriate to the Messiah, that it shall not be repeated and applied by the believer to his own trials in the world ; so that while there is much that finds a ready parallel in the exaltation of Christ in heaven, there is much that would seem to be restrained to his condition upon earth. It therefore depends much on *the mind* of the individual, whether he will receive it in the higher sense of the Redeemer's glory ; or restrict it *solely* to a thanksgiving for blessings amidst those sufferings in life to which all men have been subject in the same manner, though not to the same extent as Jesus. The most perfect and the most profitable reading would combine the two, taking Christ as *the exemplar* of God's mercies towards ourselves.

1. Enthroned in eternity, and triumphant over sin and death—I—Christ—

am well pleased that my Heavenly Father listened to the anxious prayers that I made to him in the day of my sorrows; when I had neither strength in my own mind, nor assistance from men; therefore "*through my days*"—through the endless ages of my eternal existence—will I call upon him in my gratitude, and praise him with my whole heart.

3. In the troublous times of my incarnation I was encircled with snares, and urged onwards towards my death. The priest and ruler; the Pharisee and the scribe; the rich and the poor, clamoured fiercely for my destruction. The whole nation conspired against me. "*The bands of the grave*" laid hold of me, and I was hurried to the cross.

4. Then, *truly* did Christ find heaviness and affliction. "His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He prayed anxiously to his Heavenly Father, that "the cup might pass from him." The fate of the whole world was in the balance; and he supplicated with agony, that his *soul* might be delivered.

5. The abrupt breaking off in this verse from the direct narrative of his own sorrows is wonderfully grand and beautiful. Nor less so, is the expression "*our* God" as applied by Christ to his own disciples and believers. "*I called*," he states, "*on the name of the* LORD." But he does not yet state the answer. He leaves that to be inferred from the assurance that God is *ever* gracious to the faithful; yea, "*our* God"—the protector of the Christian church, as well as of myself—"*our God is merciful.*"

6. Instanly, however, he resumes. Mark the energy of the language, "I was afflicted; and he delivered me." And how delivered? The soul of Christ hast returned freely to its tranquillity; for though the body and the frame perished on the tree, yet the soul burst through the bands of death. Again in the full stature of a perfect man Christ rose resplendent in glory to the mansions of eternity. The tears ceased; the sorrows were hushed; and henceforward, through the boundless day of immortality, doth he "walk before Jehovah, in the land of *the living.*" This last is one of those expressions in the psalm which might, without reflection, seem adapted to the rescued believer's state on earth, rather than Christ's in heaven. But applying the language of earthly things to heavenly—which is usual, even in the most mystic writings of Scripture—nothing can be finer than the appellation of "*the land of the living,*" when assigned to the future residence of the soul. It is the noblest application of the metaphor, and is singularly appropriate to those eternal mansions where death and sorrow are alike unknown.

10. This stanza will bear an emendation.

> I felt confidence, although I said,
> "I am sore afflicted."
> I said in my sudden terror,—
> "All mankind are false."—*French.*

It alludes to the eve of his crucifixion, when worn down with long watchfulness and fasting, his spirit almost fainted in the agony of Gethsemane. Still, oppressed and stricken as he was in soul, he yet trusted in Jehovah, for he felt assured that he would not forsake him. But, sustained by God, he was deserted by men, the disciples with whom he had lived; the multitudes whom he had taught; the afflicted whom he had healed, "*all* forsook him and fled." Not one—not even the "disciple whom he loved"—remained; and in the anguish of that desertion he could not refrain from the bitter thought, that all mankind were alike false and treacherous.

12. But that dread hour has passed. He has risen from the dead; and stands girt with truth and holiness and glory. What then is his earliest thought? Hear it, O man, and blush for thine oft ingratitude! I will lift up "*the cup of deliverance*"—the drink-offering made to God with sacrifice after any signal mercies received—and bless the Lord who has been thus gracious to me. In the sight of the whole world will I pay my past vows unto Jehovah,

and bring nations from every portion of the earth, reconciled and holy through the blood of my atonement.

The language in these verses, as in the concluding part of the psalm, is wholly drawn from earthly objects and modes of religious service, well recognized by the Jews. It is in these things that the *spiritual* sense is required to be separated from the external emblem. For instance, the sacramental cup was without a doubt drawn and instituted from the cup used in commemoration of deliverances by the Jews. It is used figuratively by Christ in heaven; but the reflective mind can scarcely fail to see the beauty of imagining it in his hand in thankfulness for his triumph, *because* "he has burst his bonds in sunder": the bonds which held him fast in death, and confined him to the tomb: the assertion that "precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints" *specially includes* the sacrifice of Christ within its more general allusion to the blood shed, in such abundance, by prophets and martyrs to the truth. In the same manner the worship of Jehovah in the courts of his temple at Jerusalem is used in figure for the open promulgation of Christianity to the whole world. The temple services were the most solemn and most public which were offered by the Jews; and when Christ is said to "offer his sacrifices of thanksgiving" to God *in the sight of all his people*, the figure is easily separated from the grosser element; and *the conversion* of all people intimated under the form of Christ *seen* by all.—*William Hill Tucker.*

Verse 1.—"*I love.*" The expression of the prophet's affection is in this short abrupt phrase, "*I love,*" which is but one word in the original, and expressed as a full and entire sentence in itself, thus—"*I love because the Lord hath heard,*" etc. Most translators so turn it, as if, by a trajection, or passing of a word from one sentence to another, this title Lord were to be joined with the first clause, thus—(אָהַבְתִּי כִּי־יִשְׁמַע יְהוָה), "*I love the* LORD, *because he hath heard,*" etc. I deny not but that thus the sense is made somewhat the more perspicuous, and the words run the more roundly; yet are they not altogether so emphatical. For when a man's heart is inflamed, and his soul ravished with a deep apprehension of some great and extraordinary favour, his affection will cause interruption in the expression thereof, and make stops in his speech; and therefore this concise and abrupt clause, "*I love,*" declareth a more entire and ardent affection than a more full and round phrase would do. Great is the force of true love, so that it cannot be sufficiently expressed.—*William Gouge*, 1575—1653.

Verse 1.—"*I love the* LORD." Oh that there were such hearts in us that we could every one say, as David, with David's spirit, upon his evidence, "*I love the* LORD"; that were more worth than all these, viz.; First, to know all secrets. Secondly, to prophesy. Thirdly, to move mountains, etc., 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, etc. "*I love the* LORD"; it is more than I know the Lord; for even castaways are enlightened, (Heb. vi. 4); more than I fear the Lord, for devils fear him unto trembling (James ii. 19); more than I pray to God (Isai. i. 15). What should I say? More than all services, than all virtues separate from charity: truly say the schools, charity is the form of all virtues, because it forms them all to acceptability, for nothing is accepted but what issues from charity, or, in other words, from the love of God.—*William Slater*, 1638.

Verse 1.—"*I love the* LORD, *because,*" etc. How vain and foolish is the *talk*, "To love God for his benefits towards us is mercenary, and cannot be pure love!" Whether pure or impure, there is no other love that can flow from the heart of the creature to its Creator. "We love him," said the holiest of Christ's disciples, "because he first loved us;" and the increase of our love and filial obedience is in proportion to the increased sense we have of our obligation to him. We love him for the benefits bestowed on us.—*Love begets love.*—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—"*He hath heard my voice.*" But is this such a benefit to us, that God hears us? Is his hearing our voice such an argument of his love? Alas!

he may hear us, and we be never the better: he may hear our voice, and yet his love to us may be but little, for who will not give a man the hearing, though he love him not at all? With men perhaps it may be so, but not with God; for his hearing is not only voluntary, but reserved; *non omnibus dormit:* his ears are not open to every one's cry; indeed, to hear us, is in God so great a favour, that he may well be counted his favourite whom he vouchsafes to hear: and the rather, for that his hearing is always operative, and with a purpose of helping; so that if he hear my voice, I may be sure he means to grant my supplication; or rather perhaps in David's manner of expressing, and in God's manner of proceeding, to hear my voice is no less in effect than to grant my supplication. —*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 1.—"*Hath heard.*" By hearing prayer God giveth evidence of the notice which he taketh of our estates, of the respect he beareth to our persons, of the pity he hath of our miseries, of his purpose to supply our wants, and of his mind to do us good according to our needs.—*William Gouge.*

Verses 1 and 2.—The first יִשְׁמַע is more of an aorist. The Lord hears always: and then, making a distinction הִטָּה אָזְנוֹ. He has done it hitherto: אֶקְרָא Therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live, cleaving to Him in love and faith! It should be noticed, in addition, that קָרָא here is not simply the prayer for help, but includes also the praising and thanksgiving, according to the two-fold signification of קָרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה, in verses 4, 13, and 17; therefore, Jarchi very excellently says: *In the time of my distress I will call upon Him, and in the time of my deliverance I will praise Him.—Rudolph Stier.*

Verses 1, 2.—"*I love.*" "*Therefore will I call upon him.*" It is love that doth open our mouths, that we may praise God with joyful lips: "I will love the Lord because he hath heard the voice of my supplications": and then, ver. 2, "I will call upon him as long as I live." The proper intent of mercies is to draw us to God. When the heart is full of a sense of the goodness of the Lord, the tongue cannot hold its peace. Self-love may lead us to prayers, but love to God excites us to praises: therefore to seek and not to praise, is to be lovers of ourselves rather than of God.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verses 1, 12.—"*I love.*" "*What shall I render?*" Love and thankfulness are like the symbolical qualities of the elements, easily resolved into each other. David begins with, "*I love the* LORD, *because he hath heard my voice*"; and to enkindle this grace into a greater flame, he records the mercies of God in some following verses; which done, then he is in the right mood for praise; and cries, "*What shall I render unto the* LORD *for all his benefits?*" The spouse, when thoroughly awake, pondering with herself what a friend had been at her door, and how his sweet company was lost through her unkindness, shakes off her sloth, riseth, and away she goes after him; now, when by running after her beloved, she hath put her soul into a heat of love, she breaks out in praising him from top to toe. Cant. v. 10. That is the acceptable praising which comes from a warm heart; and the saint must use some holy exercise to stir up his habit of love, which like natural heat in the body, is preserved and increased by motion.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 2.—"*He hath inclined his ear unto me.*" How great a blessing is the inclining of the Divine ear, may be judged from the conduct of great men, who do not admit a wretched petitioner to audience; but, if they do anything, receive the main part of the complaint through the officer appointed for such matters, or through a servant. But God himself hears immediately, and *inclines his ear*, hearing readily, graciously, constantly, etc. Who would not pray?—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 2.—And now *because he hath inclined his ear unto me*, I will therefore *call upon him as long as I live:* that if it be expected I should call upon any other, it must be when I am dead; for as long as I live, I have vowed to call upon God. But will this be well done? May I not, in so doing, do more than I shall have thanks for? Is this the requital that God shall have for his

kindness in hearing me, that now he shall have a customer of me, and never be quiet because of my continual running to him, and calling upon him? Doth God get anything by my calling upon him, that I should make it a vow, as though in calling upon him I did him a pleasure? O my soul, I would that God might indeed have a customer of me in praying; although I confess I should not be so bold to call upon him so continually, if his own commanding me did not make it a duty; for hath not God bid me call upon him when I am in trouble? and is there any time that I am not in trouble, as long as I live in this vale of misery? and then can there be any time as long as I live, that I must not call upon him? For shall God bid me, and shall I not do it? Shall God incline his ear, and stand listening to hear, and shall I hold my peace that he may have nothing to hear?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 2.—"*Therefore will I call upon him.*" If the hypocrite speed in prayer, and get what he asks, then also he throws up prayer, and will ask no more. If from a sick bed he be raised to health, he leaves prayer behind him, as it were, sick-abed; he grows weak in calling upon God, when at his call God hath given him strength. And thus it is in other instances. When he hath got what he hath a mind to in prayer, he hath no more mind to pray. Whereas a godly man prays after he hath sped, as he did before, and though he fall not into those troubles again, and so is not occasioned to urge those petitions again which he did in trouble, yet he cannot live without prayer, because he cannot live out of communion with God. The creature is as the white of an egg, tasteless to him, unless he enjoy God. David saith, "*I love the* LORD, *because he hath heard my voice and my supplications*"; that is, because he hath granted me that which I supplicated to him for. But did this grant of what he had asked take him off from asking more? The next words show us what his resolution was upon that grant. "*Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live*"; as if he had said, I will never give over praying, forasmuch as I have been heard in prayer.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 2.—"*As long as I live.*"—Not on some few days, but every day of my life; for to pray on certain days, and not on all, is the mark of one who loathes and not of one who loves.—*Ambrose.*

Verse 3.—Here beginneth the exemplification of God's kindness to his servant; the first branch whereof is a description of the danger wherein he was and out of which he was delivered. Now, to magnify the kindness of God the more in delivering him out of the same, he setteth it out with much variety of words and phrases.

The first word חֶבְלֵי, "*sorrows*," is diversely translated. Some expound it snares, some cords, some sorrows. The reason of this difference is because the word itself is metaphorical. It is taken from cruel creditors, who will be sure to tie their debtors fast, as with cords, so that they shall not easily get loose and free again. The pledge which the debtor leaveth with his creditor as a pawn, hath this name in Hebrew; so also a cord wherewith things are fast tied; and the mast of a ship fast fixed, and tied on every side with cords; and bands or troops of men combined together; and the pain of a woman in travail, which is very great; and destruction with pain and anguish. Thus we see that such a word is used here as setteth out a most lamentable and inextricable case.

The next word, "*of death*" מָוֶת, sheweth that his case was deadly; death was before his eyes; death was as it were threatened. He is said to be "*compassed*" herewith in two respects: (1.) To show that these sorrows were not far off, but even upon him, as waters that compass a man when he is in the midst of them, or as enemies that begird a place. (2.) To show that they were not few, but many sorrows, as bees that swarm together.

The word translated "*pains*," מְצָרֵי, in the original is put for sacks fast bound together, and flint stones, and fierce enemies, and hard straits; so that this word also aggravateth his misery.

The word translated "*hell*," שְׁאוֹל, is usually taken in the Old Testament for the grave; it is derived from שָׁאַל, a verb that signifieth to crave, because the grave is ever craving, and never satisfied.

The word translated "*gat hold on me*," כִּיצָאוּנִי, and "*I found*," אֶמְצָא, are both the same verb; they differ only in circumstances of tense, number, and person. The former sheweth that these miseries found him, and as a serjeant they seized on him; he did not seek them, he would wittingly and willingly have escaped them, if he could. The latter sheweth that indeed he found them; he felt the tartness and bitterness, the smart and pain of them.

The word translated *trouble*, צָרָה of צוּר, hath a near affinity with the former word translated pain, מִצַּר of צוּר, and is used to set out as great misery as that; and yet further to aggravate the same, another word is added thereto, "*sorrow*."

The last word, "*sorrow*," יָגוֹן of יָגָה, importeth such a kind of calamity as maketh them that lie under it much to grieve, and also moveth others that behold it much to pity them. It is often used in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Either of these two last words, trouble and sorrow, do declare a very perplexed and distressed estate; what then both of them joined together? For the Holy Ghost doth not multiply words in vain.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 3.—"*Gat hold upon me.*" The original word is, *found me*, as we put in the margin. They found him, as an officer or serjeant finds a person that he is sent to arrest; who no sooner finds him, but he takes hold of him, or takes him into custody. When warrants are sent out to take a man who keeps out of the way, the return is, *Non est inventus*, the man is not found, he cannot be met with, or taken hold of. David's pains quickly found him, and having found him they gat hold of him. Such finding is so certainly and suddenly followed with taking hold, and holding what is taken, that one word in the Hebrew serves to express both acts. When God sends out troubles and afflictions as officers to attack any man, they will find him, and finding him, they will take hold of him. The days of affliction will take hold; there's no striving, no struggling with them, no getting out of their hands. These divine pursuivants will neither be persuaded nor bribed to let you go, till God speak the word, till God say, Deliver him, release him. "*I found trouble and sorrow.*" I found trouble which I looked not for. I was not searching after sorrow, but I found it. There's an elegancy in the original. The Hebrew is, "*The pains of hell found me.*" They found me, I did not find them; but no sooner had the pains of hell found me, than I found trouble and sorrow, enough, and soon enough.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3.—See how the saints instead of lessening the dangers and tribulations, with which they are exercised by God, magnify them in figurative phraseology; neither do they conceal their distress of soul, but clearly and willingly set it forth. Far otherwise are the minds of those who regard their own glory and not the glory of God. The saints, that they may make more illustrious the glory of the help of God, declare things concerning themselves which make but little for their own glory.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verses 3—7.—Those usually have most of heaven upon earth, that formerly have met with most of hell upon earth. "*The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow:* (as Jonas crying in the belly of hell). But look upon him within two or three verses after, and you may see him in an ecstasy, as if he were in heaven; verse 7: "*Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the* LORD *hath dealt bountifully with thee.*"—*Matthew Lawrence.*

Verse 4.—"*The name of the* LORD." God's name, as it is set out in the word, is both a glorious name, full of majesty; and also a gracious name, full of mercy. His majesty worketh fear and reverence, his mercy faith and confidence. By these graces man's heart is kept within such a compass, that he will neither presume above that which is meet, nor despond more than there is cause. But where God's name is not rightly known, it cannot be avoided but that they

who come before him must needs rush upon the rock of presumption, or sink into the gulf of desperation. Necessary, therefore, it is that God be known of them that pray to him, that in truth they may say, "*We have called upon the name of the* LORD." Be persuaded hereby so to offer up your spiritual sacrifice of supplication to God, that he may have respect to your persons and prayers, as he had respect to Abel and his offering. Learn to know the name of God, as in his word it is made known; and then, especially when you draw near to him, meditate on his name. Assuredly God will take good notice of them that take due notice of him, and will open his ears to them by name who rightly call upon his name.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 4.—"*O* LORD, *I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*" A short prayer for so great a suit, and yet as short as it was, it prevailed. If we wondered before at the power of God, we may wonder now at the power of prayer, that can prevail with God, for obtaining of that which in nature is impossible, and to reason is incredible.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4.—We learn here that there is nothing better and more effectual in distressing agonies than assiduous prayer—"*Then called I upon the name of the* LORD;" but in such prayers the first care ought to be for the salvation of the soul—"*I beseech thee, deliver my soul*"; for, this being done, God also either removes or mitigates the bodily disease.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Verse 5.—"*Gracious is the Lord,*" etc. He is *gracious* in hearing, he is "*righteous*" in judging, he is "*merciful*" in pardoning, and how, then, can I doubt of his will to help me? He is righteous to reward according to deserts; he is gracious to reward above deserts; yea, he is merciful to reward without deserts; and how, then, can I doubt of his will to help me? He is gracious, and this shews his bounty; he is righteous, and this shews his justice; yea, he is merciful, and this shews his love; and how, then, can I doubt of his will to help me? If he were not gracious I could not hope he would hear me; if he were not righteous, I could not depend upon his promise; if he were not merciful, I could not expect his pardon; but now that he is gracious and righteous and merciful too, how can I doubt of his will to help me?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 5.—The first attribute, "*gracious,*" (חַנּוּן) hath especial respect to that goodness which is in God himself. The root (חָנַן) whence it cometh signifieth to do a thing gratis, freely, of one's own mind and goodwill. This is that word which is used to set out the free grace and mere goodwill of God, thus (וְחַנֹּתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אָחֹן), "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious," Exod. xxxiii. 19. There is also an adverb (חִנָּם) derived thence, which signifieth gratis, freely, as where Laban thus speaketh to Jacob, "Shouldst thou serve me for nought?" Thus is the word opposed to merit. And hereby the prophet acknowledged that the deliverance which God gave was for the Lord's own sake, upon no desert of him that was delivered.

The second attribute, "*righteous*" or just, (צַדִּיק), hath particular relation to the promise of God. God's righteousness largely taken is the integrity or equity of all his counsels, words, and actions. . . . . Particularly is God's righteousness manifested in giving reward and taking vengeance. Thus it is said to be "a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest," 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. . . But the occasion of mentioning God's righteousness here in this place being to show the ground of his calling on God, and of God's delivering him, it must needs have respect to God's word and promise, and to God's truth in performing what he hath promised.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 5.—"*The* LORD"; "*our God.*" The first title, "*Lord,*" sets out the excellency of God. Fit mention is here made thereof, to shew the blessed concurrence of greatness and goodness in God. Though he be Jehovah the Lord, yet is he gracious, and righteous, and merciful. The second title, "*our God,*" manifesteth a peculiar relation betwixt him and the faithful that believe in him,

and depend on him, as this prophet did. And to them in an especial manner the Lord is gracious, which moved him thus to change the person; for where he had said in the third person "the Lord is gracious," here, in the first person, he says, "*our God*," yet so that he appropriateth not this privilege to himself, but acknowledgeth it to be common to all of like character by using the plural number, "*our*."—*William Gouge.*

Verse 5.—The "Berlenburger Bibelwerk" says, "The righteousness is very significantly placed between the grace and the mercy: for it is still necessary, that the evil should be mortified and driven out. Grace lays, as it were, the foundation for salvation, and mercy perfects the work; but not till righteousness has finished its intermediary work."—*Rudolph Stier.*

Verse 5.—"*Our God is merciful.*" Mercy is God's darling attribute; and by his infinite wisdom he has enabled mercy to triumph over justice without in any degree violating his honour or his truth. The character of merciful is that by which our God seems to delight in being known. When he proclaimed himself amid terrific grandeur to the children of Israel, it was as "the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin." And such was the impression of this his character on the mind of Jonah that he says to him, "I knew that thou wert a merciful God." These, however, are not mere assertions—claims made to the character by God on the one hand, and extorted without evidence from man on the other; for in whatever way we look upon God, and examine into his conduct towards his creatures, we perceive it to bear the impression of mercy. Nor can we more exalt the Lord our God than by speaking of his mercy and confiding in it; for our "Lord's delight is in them that fear him, and put their trust in his mercy."—*John Gwyther*, 1833.

Verse 6.—"*The* LORD *preserveth the simple.*" God taketh most care of them that, being otherwise least cared for, wholly depend on him. These are in a good sense simple ones; simple in the world's account, and simple in their own eyes. Such as he that said, "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." Ps. xxii. 6. And again, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me." Ps. xl. 17. These are those poor ones of a contrite spirit on whom the Lord looketh. Isai. lxvi. 2. Of such fatherless is God a father; and of such widows a judge. Read Ps. lxviii. 5, and cxlvi. 7, 8, 9. Yea, read observantly the histories of the Gospel, and well weigh who they were to whom Christ in the days of his flesh afforded succour, and you shall find them to be such simple ones as are here intended.

By such objects the free grace and merciful mind of the Lord is best manifested. Their case being most miserable, in reference to human helps, the greater doth God's mercy appear to be; and since there is nothing in them to procure favour or succour from God, for in their own and others' eyes they are nothing, what God doth for them evidently appeareth to be freely done.

Behold here how of all others they who seem to have least cause to trust on God have most cause to trust on him. Simple persons, silly wretches, despicable fools in the world's account, who have not subtle brains, or crafty wits to search after indirect means, have, notwithstanding, enough to support them, in the grand fact that they are such as the Lord preserveth. Now, who knoweth not that "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes"? Ps. cxviii. 8, 9.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 6.—"*The* LORD *preserveth the simple.*" How delightful it is to be able to reflect on the character of God as *preserving* the soul. The word properly signifies to defend us at any season of danger. The Hebrew word which is translated "*simple*," signifies one who has no control over himself, one that cannot resist the power and influence of those around, and one, therefore, subject to the greatest peril from which he has naturally no deliverance. "The Lord preserveth": his eye is upon them, his hand is over

them, and they cannot fall. The word "*simple*" signifies likewise those that are ignorant of their condition, and not watching over their foes. Delightful thought, that though we may be thus ignorant, yet we are blessed with the means of escape! We may be simple to the last extent, and our simplicity may be such as to involve our mind in the greatest doubt: the Lord preserveth us, and let us rest in him. It is delightful to reflect, that it is the simple in whom the Lord delights, whom he loves to bless. We are sometimes especially in the condition in which we may be inclined to make the inquiry, how we may be saved. We suppose there are many truths to be apprehended, many principles to be realized before we can be saved. No;—"the LORD preserveth the simple." We may be able to reconcile scarcely any of the doctrines of Christianity with each other; we may find ourselves in the greatest perplexity when we examine the evidences on which they rest; we may be exposed to great difficulty when we seek to apply them to practical usefulness; but still we may adopt the language before us: "*The* LORD *preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*"—*R. S. M'All*, 1834.

Verse 6.—"*The* LORD *preserveth the simple.*" The term *simple* equals the "simplicity" of the New Testament, namely, that pure mind towards God, which, without looking out for help from any other quarter, and free from all dissimulation, expects salvation from him alone.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 6.—"*The simple.*" They are such as honestly keep the plain way of God's commandments, without those slights, or creeks of carnal policy, for which men are in the world esteemed wise; see Gen. xxv. 27, where Jacob is called a plain man. Simple or foolish he calls them, because they are generally so esteemed amongst the wise of the world; not that they are so silly as they are esteemed; for if the Lord can judge of wisdom or folly, the only fool is the Atheist and profane person (Ps. xiv. 1); the only wise man in the world is the plain, downright Christian (Deut. iv. 6), who keeps himself precisely in all states to that plain, honest course the Lord hath prescribed him. To such simple ones, God's fools, who in their misery and affliction keep them only to the means of deliverance and comfort which the Lord hath prescribed them, belongs this blessing of preservation from mischief, or destruction: so Solomon (Prov. xvi. 17), "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil." "He that keepeth his way preserveth his soul"; see also Prov. xix. 16, 23; for exemplification see in Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. 9—12, and xvi. 7, 8, 9, read the excellent speech of Hanani the seer.—*William Slater*, 1638.

Verse 6.—"*I was brought low.*" By affliction and trial. The Hebrew literally means to hang down, to be pendulous, to swing, to wave—as a bucket in a well, or as the slender branches of the palm, the willow, &c. Then it means to be slack, feeble, weak, as in sickness, &c. It probably refers to the prostration of strength by disease. "*And he helped me.*" He gave me strength; he restored me.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 6.—"*I was brought low, and he helped me.*" The word translated "*brought low*," דַּלּוֹתִי *a* דָּלָה, properly signifieth to be drawn dry. The metaphor is taken from ponds, or brooks, or rivers that are clean exhausted and dried up, where water utterly faileth. Thus doth Isaiah use this word, "The brooks shall be emptied and dried up," Isa. xix. 6, דָּלְלוּ וְחָרְבוּ יְאֹרִי. Being applied to man, it setteth out such an one as is spent, utterly wasted, or, as we use to speak, clean gone, who hath no ability to help himself, no means of help, no hope of help from others.

The other word whereby the succour which God afforded is expressed, and translated "*helped*" יְהוֹשִׁיעַ *ab* יָשַׁע signifieth such help as freeth out of danger. It is usually translated "to save."—*William Gouge.*

Verse 6.—"*I was brought low, and he helped me.*" Then is the time of help, when men are brought low: and therefore God who does all things in due time when I was brought low, then helped me. Wherefore, O my soul, let it never trouble thee how low soever thou be brought, for when thy state is at the lowest, then is God's assistance at the nearest. We may truly say, God's

ways are not as the ways of the world, for in the world when a man is once brought low, he is commonly trampled upon, and nothing is heard then but, "down with him, down to the ground" : but with God it is otherwise ; for his delight is to raise up them that fall, and when they are brought low, then to help them. Hence it is no such hard case for a man to be brought low, may I not rather say his case is happy ? For is it not better to be brought low, and have God to help him, than to be set aloft and left to help himself ? At least, O my body, this may be a comfort to thee : for thou art sure to be brought low, as low as the grave, which is low indeed ; yet there thou mayest rest in hope ; for even there the Lord will not fail to help thee.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 6.—"*He helped me.*" Helped me both to bear the worst and to hope the best ; helped me to pray, else desire had failed · helped me to wait, else faith had failed.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—"*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*" The psalmist had been at a great deal of unrest, and much *off the hooks*, as we say ; now, having prayed (for prayer hath *vim pacativam*, a pacifying property), he calleth his soul to rest ; and rocketh it asleep in a spiritual security. Oh, learn this holy art ; acquaint thyself with God, acquiesce in him, and be at peace ; so shall good be done unto thee. Job xxii. 21. *Sis Sabbathum Christi.* Luther.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 7.—Gracious souls rest in God ; they and none else. Whatever others may speak of a rest in God, only holy souls know what it means. "*Return unto thy rest, O my soul,*" to thy rest in calm and cheerful submission to God's will, delight in his service, satisfaction in his presence, and joy in communion begun with him here below, which is to be perfected above in its full fruition. Holy souls rest in God, and in his will ; in his will of precept as their sovereign Lord, whose commands concerning all things are right, and in the keeping of which there is great reward ; in his will of providence as their absolute owner, and who does all things well ; in himself as their God, their portion, and their chief good, in whom they shall have all that they can need, or are capable of enjoying to complete their blessedness for ever.—*Daniel Wilcox.*

Verse 7.—"*Return unto thy rest.*" Return to that rest which Christ gives to the weary and heavy laden, Matt. xi. 28. Return to thy Noah, his name signifies *rest*, as the dove when she found no rest returned to the ark. I know no word more proper to close our eyes with at night when we go to sleep, nor to close them with at death, that long sleep, than this, "*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*"—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—"*Return unto thy rest.*" Consider the variety of aspects of that rest which a good man seeks, and the ground upon which he will endeavour to realize it. It consists in, 1. Rest from the perplexities of ignorance, and the wanderings of error. 2. Rest from the vain efforts of self-righteousness, and the disquetiude of a proud and legal spirit. 3. Rest from the alarms of conscience, and the apprehensions of punishment hereafter. 4. Rest from the fruitless struggles of our degenerate nature, and unaided conflicts with indwelling sin. 5. Rest from the fear of temporal suffering and solicitude arising from the prospect of danger and trial. 6. Rest from the distraction of uncertainty and indecision of mind, and from the fluctuations of undetermined choice.—*R. S. M'All.*

Verse 7.—"*Return,*" שׁוּבִי. This is the very word which the angel used to Hagar when she fled from her mistress, "Return," Gen. xvi. 9. As Hagar through her mistress' rough dealing with her fled from her, so the soul of this prophet by reason of affliction fell from its former quiet confidence in God. As the angel therefore biddeth Hagar "return to her mistress," so the understanding of this prophet biddeth his soul return to its rest.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 7.—"*Rest.*" The word "*rest*" is put in the plural, as indicating complete and entire rest, at all times, and under all circumstances.—*A. Edersheim.*

Verses 7, 8.—"*For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*" He hath dealt

indeed most bountifully with thee, for where thou didst make suit but for one thing, he hath granted thee three. Thou didst ask but to have my soul delivered, and he hath delivered mine eyes and my feet besides; and with a deliverance in each of them the greatest that could be: for what greater deliverance to my soul than to be delivered from death? What greater deliverance to my eyes than to be delivered from tears? What to my feet than to be delivered from falling? That if now, O my soul, thou return not to thy rest, thou wilt show thyself to be most insatiable; seeing thou hast not only more than thou didst ask, but as much indeed as was possible to be asked.

But can my soul die? and if not, what bounty is it to deliver my soul from that to which it is not subject? The soul indeed, though immortal, hath yet her ways of dying. It is one kind of death to the soul to be parted from the body, but the truest kind is to be parted from God; and from both these kinds of death he hath delivered my soul. From the first, by delivering me from a dangerous sickness that threatened a dissolution of my soul and body; from the other, by delivering me from the guilt of sin, which threatened a separation from the favour of God; and are not these bounties so great as to give my soul just cause of returning to her rest?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verses 7, 9.—"*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*" . . . . "*I will walk.*" How can these two stand together? *Motus et quiesprivatè opponuntur*, saith the philosopher, motion and rest are opposite; now *walking* is a *motion*, as being an act of the locomotive faculty. How then could David *return to his rest* and yet *walk?* You must know that *walking* and *rest* here mentioned, being of a *divine* nature, do not oppose each other; *spiritual rest* maketh no man *idle*, and therefore it is no enemy to walking; *spiritual walking* maketh no man *weary*, and therefore it is no enemy to rest. Indeed, they are so far from being opposite that they are subservient to each other, and it is hard to say whether that *rest* be the *cause* of this *walking*, or this *walking* a *cause* of that *rest*. Indeed, both are true, since he that *rests in God* cannot but *walk before him*, and by *walking before*, we come to *rest in God*. *Returning to rest* is an act of *confidence*, since there is no rest to be had but in God, nor in God but by believing affiance in, and reliance on him. *Walking before God* is an act of *obedience;* when we disobey we wander and go astray, only by obedience we walk. Now these two are so far from being enemies, that they are companions and ever go together; confidence being a means to quicken obedience, and obedience to strengthen confidence. —*Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 8.—"*Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*" Lo, here a deliverance, not from one, but many dangers, to wit, "*death,*" "*tears,*" "*falling.*" Single deliverances are as threads; but when multiplied, they become as a cord twisted of many threads, more potent to draw us to God. Any one mercy is as a link, but many favours are as a chain consisting of several links, to bind us the closer to our duty; *vis unita fortior.* Frequent droppings of the rain cannot but make an impression even on the stone, and renewed mercies may well prevail with the stony heart. Parisiensis relateth a story of a man whom (notwithstanding his notorious and vicious courses) God was pleased to accumulate favours upon, so that at last he cried out, "*Vicisti, benignissime Deus, indefatigabili sua bonitate,* Most gracious God, thy unwearied goodness hath overcome my obstinate wickedness"; and from that time devoted himself to God's service. No wonder, then, if David upon deliverance from such numerous and grievous afflictions, maketh this his resolve, to "*walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*"—*Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 8.—As an humble and sensible soul will pack up many troubles in one, so a thankful soul will divide one mercy into sundry particular branches, as here the Psalmist distinguisheth, the delivery of his soul from death, of his eyes from tears, and of his feet from falling.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 8.—Some distinguish the three particulars thus: "*He hath delivered my soul from death,*" by giving me a good conscience; "*mine eyes from tears,*" by giving a quiet conscience; "*my feet from falling,*" by giving an enlightened and assured conscience.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 8.—"*My feet from falling.*" Whether means he, into penal misery and mischief, or into sin? There is a *lapsus moralis*, as 1 Cor. x. 12. Err I? or would David here be understood of sinning? So Ps. lxxiii. 2: "My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped." And if I be not deceived, the text leans to that meaning, rising still from the less to the greater. First. It is more bounty to be kept from grief than from death, for there is a greater enlargement from misery. It is not more bounty to be kept from the sense of affliction than to be kept from death, which is the greatest of temporal evils; but it is more bounty in a gracious eye to be kept from sin than from death. Secondly. *How his eyes from tears?* If not kept from sin? That had surely cost him many a tear, as Peter (Matt. xxvi. 75). But understand it *de lapsu morali*, so the gradation still riseth to enlarge God's bounty: yea, which I count the greatest blessing, in these afflictions he kept me steady in my course of piety, and suffered not afflictions to sway my heart from him. Still, in a gracious eye, the benefit seems greater to be delivered from sinning than from the greatest outward affliction. This is the reason Paul (Rom. viii. 37) triumphs over all afflictions. 2 Cor. xi. and xii. He counts them his glory, his crown; but speaking of the prevailing of corruption in particular, he bemoans himself as the miserablest man alive. Rom. vii. 24.—*William Slater.*

Verse 9.—"*I will walk,*" etc. It is a holy resolution which this verse records. The previous verse had mentioned among the mercies vouchsafed, "Thou hast delivered my feet from falling"; and the first use of the restored limb is, "*I will walk before the* LORD." It reminds me of the crippled beggar at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, to whom Peter had said, "In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk"; and "immediately his ancle-bones received strength, and he leaping up stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." It is a very sure mark of a grateful heart to employ the gift to the praise of the giver, in such a manner as he would most wish it to be employed.—*Barton Bourchier.*

Verse 9.—When thou, my soul, returnest to this rest, thou shalt walk in order that thou mayest have some exercise in thy rest, that thy resting may not make thee restive. "*I will walk before the* LORD *in the land of the living.*" For now that my feet are delivered from falling, how can I better employ them than in walking? Were they delivered from falling that they should stand still and be idle? No, my soul, but to encourage me to walk: and where is so good walking as in the land of the living? Alas! what walking is it in the winter, when all things are dead, when the very grass lies buried under ground, and scarce anything that has life in it is to be seen? But then is the pleasant walking, when nature spreads her green carpet to walk upon, and then it is the land of the living, when the trees shew they live, by bringing forth, if not fruits, at least leaves; when the valleys shew they live, by bringing forth sweet flowers to delight the smell, at least fresh grass to please the eyes. But is this the walking in the land of the living that David means? O my soul, to walk in the land of the living is to walk in the paths of righteousness: for there is no such death to the soul as sin, no such cause of tears to the eyes as guiltiness of conscience, no such falling of the feet as to fall from God: and therefore, to say the truth, the soul can never return to its rest if we walk not withal in the paths of righteousness; and we cannot well say whether this rest be a cause of the walk, or the walking be a cause of the resting: but this we may say, they are certainly companions the one to the other, which is in effect but this—that justification can never be without sanctification. Peace of conscience, and godliness of life, can never be one without the other. Or is it perhaps that David means that land of

the living where Enoch and Elias are living, with the living God? But if he mean so, how can he speak so confidently, and say, "*I will walk in the land of the living*"? as though he could come to walk there by his own strength, or at his own pleasure? He therefore gives his reason: "*I believed, and therefore I spake*," for the voice of faith is strong, and speaks with confidence; and because in faith he believes that he should come to walk in the land of the living, therefore with confidence he speaks it, "*I will walk in the land of the living.*"—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 9.—"*I will walk before the* LORD *in the land of the living*," *i.e.*, I shall pass the whole of my life under his fatherly care and protection. The prophet has regard to the custom of men, and chiefly of parents: for those who ardently love their children have them always in their thoughts and carry them there, never ceasing from care and anxiety about them, but being always attentive to their safety. *Omnis enim in natis chari stat cura parentis.* Children are, therefore, said to walk before and in the sight of their parents, because they have them as constant guardians of their health and safety. Thus also the godly in this life walk before God, that is to say, are defended by his care and protection.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 9.—"*I will walk before the* LORD." According to a different reading of the first word, "*I shall*," and, "*I will*," the clause puts on several senses; if read "*I shall walk*," they are words of *confident expectation;* if "*I will*," they are words of *obedient resolution.* According to the former, the psalmist promiseth somewhat to himself from God; according to the latter, he promiseth somewhat of himself to God. Both these constructions are probable and profitable. "*Before God*"; that is, in his service; or, "*before God*," that is, under his care. Let us consider both senses. 1. "*I shall walk before the* LORD *in the land of the living*"; that is, by continuing in this world, I shall have opportunity of doing God service. It was not because those holy men had less assurance of God's love than we, but because they had greater affections to God's service than we, that this life was so amiable in their eyes. To this purpose the reasonings of David and Hezekiah concerning death and the grave are very observable. "Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth"? so David, Ps. xxx. 9. "The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee"; so Hezekiah, Isai. xxxviii. 18. They saw death would render them useless for God's honour, and therefore they prayed for life.

It lets us see why a religious man may desire life, that he may "*walk before the* LORD," and minister to him in the place wherein he hath set him. Indeed, that joy, hope, and desire of life which is founded upon this consideration is not only lawful, but commendable; and truly herein is a vast difference between the wicked and the godly. To walk in the land of the living is the wicked man's desire, yea, were it possible he would walk here for ever; but for what end? only to enjoy his lusts, have his fill of pleasure, and increase his wealth: whereas the godly man's aim in desiring to live is that he may "*walk before God*," advance his glory, and perform his service. Upon this account it is that one hath fitly taken notice how David doth not say, I shall now satiate myself with delights in my royal city, but, "*I shall walk before the* LORD *in the land of the living.*"

2. And most suitably to this interpretation, this "*before the* LORD," means *under the Lord's careful eye.* The words according to the Hebrew may be read, *before the face of the* LORD, by which is meant his presence, and that not general, before which all men walk, but special, before which only good men walk. Indeed, in this sense *God's face* is as much as his favour; and as to be cast out of his sight is to be under his anger, so to walk before his face is to be in favour with him: so that the meaning is, as the psalmist had said, I shall live securely and safely in this world under the careful protection of the Almighty; and this is the confidence which he here seemeth to utter with so much joy, that God's gracious providence should watch over him the remainder of his days.—*Nathaniel Hardy, in a Sermon entitled "Thankfulness in Grain,"* 1654.

Verse 9.—"*In the land of the living.*" These words admit of a threefold interpretation, being understood by some, especially for *the land of Judea.* By others, erroneously for *the Jerusalem which is above.* By the most, and most probably, for this *habitable earth,* the *present world.*

1. That exposition which Cajetan, Lorinus, with others, give of the words, would not be rejected, who conceive that by "*the land of the living*" David here meaneth Judea, in which, or rather over which being constituted king, he resolveth to walk before God, and do him service. This is not improbably that "*land of the living*" in which the psalmist when an exile "believed to see the goodness of the Lord"; this is certainly that "*land of the living*" wherein God promiseth to "set his glory"; nor was this title without just reason appropriated to that country. (1.) *Partly,* because it was a "*land*" which afforded the most plentiful supports and comforts of natural life, in regard of the wholesomeness of the climate, the goodness of the soil, the overflowing of milk and honey, with other conveniences both for food and delight. (2.) *Chiefly,* because it was the "*land*" in which the living God was worshipped, and where he vouchsafed to place his name; whereas the other parts of the world worshipped lifeless things, of which the psalmist saith, "They have mouths, and speak not; eyes, and see not; ears, and hear not."

2. "*The land of the living*" is construed by the ancients to be that *heavenly country,* the place of the blessed. Indeed, this appellation does most fitly agree with heaven: this world is *desertum mortuorum,* a desert of dead, at least, dying men; that only is *regio vivorum,* a region of living saints. "He who is our life" is in heaven, yea, "our life is hid with him in God," and therefore we cannot be said to live till we come thither. . . In this sense no doubt that devout bishop and martyr, Babilas, used the words, who being condemned by Numerianus, the emperor, to an unjust death, a little before his execution repeated this and the two preceding verses, with a loud voice. Nor is it unfit for any dying saint to comfort himself with the like application of these words, and say in a confident hope of that blessed sight, "*I shall walk before the* LORD *in the land of the living.*"

3. But doubtless the literal and proper meaning of these words is of *David's abode in the world;* during which time, wheresoever he should be, he would "*walk before God*"; for that seems to be the emphasis of the plural number, *lands,* according to the original. The world consists of many countries, several lands, and it is possible for men either by force, or unwillingly, to remove from one country to another: but a good man when he changeth his country, yet altereth not his religion, yea, wherever he is he resolveth to serve his God.—*Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 9.—"*Land of the living.*" How unmeet, how shameful, how odious a thing is it that dead men should be here on the face of the earth, which is "*the land of the living.*" That there are such is too true. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," 1 Tim. v. 6; Sardis had a name that she lived, but was dead, Rev. iii. 1; "The dead bury their dead," Matt. viii. 22; all natural men are "dead in sins," Eph. ii. 1, 2 Cor. v. 14.—*William Gouge,*

Verses 9, 12, etc.—The Hebrew word that is rendered *walk,* signifies a continued action, or the reiteration of an action. David resolves that he will not only take a turn or two with God, or walk a pretty way with God, as Orpah did with Ruth, and then take his leave of God, as Orpah did of her mother, Ruth i. 10—15; but he resolves, whatever comes on it, that he will walk constantly, resolutely, and perpetually before God; or before the face of the Lord. Now, walking before the face of the Lord doth imply a very exact, circumspect, accurate, and precise walking before God; and indeed, no other walking is either suitable or pleasing to the eye of God. But is this all that he will do upon the receipt of such signal mercies? Oh no! for he resolves to take the cup of salvation, and to call upon the name of the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, vers. 13, 17. But is this all that he will do? Oh, no! for he resolves that he will presently pay his vows unto the Lord in the

presence of all his people, vers. 14, 18. But is this all that he will do? Oh, no! for he resolves that he will love the Lord better than ever and more than ever, vers. 1, 2. He loved God before with a real love, but having now received such rare mercies from God, he is resolved to love God with a more raised love, and with a more inflamed love, and with a more active and stirring love, and with a more growing and increasing love than ever.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 10.—"*I believed, therefore have I spoken.*" It is not sufficient to believe, unless thou also openly confessest before unbelievers, tyrants, and all others. Next to believing follows confession; and therefore, those who do not make a confession ought to fear; as, on the contrary, those should hope who speak out what they have believed.—*Paulus Palanterius.*

Verse 10.—"*I believed, therefore have I spoken.*" That is to say, I firmly believe what I say, therefore I make no scruple of saying it. This should be connected with the preceding verse, and the full stop should be placed at "spoken."—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 10.—"*I believed,*" etc. Some translate the words thus: "*I believed when I said, I am greatly afflicted:* I believed when I said in my haste, "*all men are liars*"; *q. d.*, Though I have had my *offs* and my *ons*, though I have passed through several frames of heart and tempers of soul in my trials, yet I believed still. I never let go my hold, my grip of God, in my perturbation.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 10.—The heart and tongue should go together. The tongue should always be the heart's interpreter, and the heart should always be the tongue's suggester; what is spoken with the tongue should be first stamped upon the heart and wrought off from it. Thus it should be in all our communications and exhortations, especially when we speak or exhort about the things of God, and dispense the mysteries of heaven. David spake from his heart when he spake from his faith. "*I believed, therefore have I spoken.*" Believing is an act of the heart, "with the heart man believeth"; so that to say, "*I believed, therefore have I spoken,*" is as if he had said, I would never have spoken these things, if my heart had not been clear and upright in them. The apostle takes up that very protestation from David (2 Cor. iv. 13): "According as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak"; that is, we move others to believe nothing but what we believe, and are fully assured of ourselves.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—"*I was greatly afflicted.*" After that our minstrel hath made mention of faith and of speaking the word of God, whereby are to be understood all good works that proceed and come forth out of faith, he now singeth of the cross, and sheweth that he was very sore troubled, grievously threatened, uncharitably blasphemed, evil reported, maliciously persecuted, cruelly troubled, and made to suffer all kinds of torments for uttering and declaring the word of God. "*I believed,*" saith he, "*therefore have I spoken; but I was very sore troubled.*" Christ's word and the cross are companions inseparable. As the shadow followeth the body, so doth the cross follow the word of Christ: and as fire and heat cannot be separated, so cannot the gospel of Christ and the cross be plucked asunder.—*Thomas Becon* (1511—1567 or 1570).

Verses 10, 11.—The meaning seems to be this—I spake as I have declared (ver. 4) because I trusted in God. I was greatly afflicted, I was in extreme distress, I was in great astonishment and trembling (as the word rendered "*haste*" signifies trembling as well as haste, as it is rendered in Deut. xx. 3;) and in these circumstances I did not trust in man; I said, "*all men are liars*"—*i.e.*, not fit to be trusted in; those that will fail and deceive the hopes of those who trust in them, agreeable to Psalm lxii. 8, 9.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 11.—"*I said in my haste, All men are liars,*" Rather, in an ecstasy of despair, I said, the whole race of man is a delusion.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 11.—"*All men are liars.*" That is to say, every man who speaks in the

ordinary manner of men concerning happiness, and sets great value on the frail and perishable things of this world, is a liar: for true and solid happiness is not to be found in the country of the living. This explanation solves the sophism proposed by St. Basil. If every man be a liar, then David was a liar; therefore he lies when he says, every man is a liar—thus contradicting himself, and destroying his own position. This is answered easily; for when David spoke he did so not as man, but from an inspiration of the Holy Ghost.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 11.—"*All men are liars.*" Juvenal said, "Dare to do something worthy of transportation and imprisonment, if you mean to be of consequence. Honesty is praised, but starves." A pamphlet was published some time ago with the title, "*Whom shall we hang?*" A very appropriate one might *now* be written with a slight change in the title—"*Whom shall we trust?*"—*From* "*A New Dictionary of Quotations,*" 1872.

Verses 11—15.—It seems that to give the lie was not so heinous an offence in David's time as it is in these days; for else how durst he have spoken such words, "*That all men are liars,*" which is no less than to give the lie to the whole world? and yet no man, I think, will challenge him for saying so; no more than challenge St. John for saying that all men are sinners, and indeed how should any man avoid being a liar, seeing the very being of man is itself a lie? not only is it a vanity, and put in the balance less than vanity; but a very lie, promising great matters, and able to do just nothing, as Christ saith, "without me ye can do nothing": and so Christ seems to come in, to be David's second, and to make his word good, that *all men are liars.* And now let the world do its worst, and take the lie how it will, for David having Christ on his side, will always be able to make his part good against all the world, for Christ hath overcome the world.

But though all men may be said to be liars, yet not all men in all things; for then David himself should be a liar in this: but all men perhaps in something or other, at some time or other, in some kind or other. Absolute truth is not found in any man, but in that man only who was not man only; for if he had been but so, it had not perhaps been found in him neither, seeing absolute truth and deity are as relatives, never found to be asunder.

But in what thing is it that all men should be liars? Indeed, in this for one: to think that God regards not, and loves not them whom he suffers to be afflicted; for we may rather think he loves them most whom he suffers to be most afflicted; and we may truly say he would never have suffered his servant Job to be afflicted so exceeding cruelly, if he had not loved him exceeding tenderly; for there is nothing lost by suffering afflictions. No, my soul, they do but serve to make up the greater weight of glory, when it shall be revealed.

But let God's afflictions be what they can be, yet I will always acknowledge they can never be in any degree so great as his benefits: and oh, that *I could think of something that I might render to him for all his benefits:* for shall I receive such great, such infinite benefits from him, and shall I render nothing to him by way of gratefulness? But, alas, what have I to render? All my rendering to him will be but taking more from him: for all I can do is but to "*take the cup of salvation, and call upon his name,*" and what rendering is there in this taking? If I could take the cup of tribulation, and drink it off for his sake, this might be a rendering of some value; but this, God knows, is no work for me to do. It was his work, who said, "Can ye drink of the cup, of which I shall drink?" Indeed, he drank of the cup of tribulation, to the end that we might take the cup of salvation; but then in taking it we must call upon his name; upon his name and upon no other; for else we shall make it a cup of condemnation, seeing there is no name under heaven, in which we may be saved, but only the name of Jesus.

Yet it may be some rendering to the Lord if I pay my vows, and do, as it were, my penance openly; "*I will therefore pay my vows to the Lord, in the presence of all his people.*" But might he not pay his vows as well in his closet,

between God and himself, as to do it publicly? No, my soul, it serves not his turn, but he must pay them in the presence of all his people; yet not to the end he should be applauded for a just payer; for though he pay them, yet he can never pay them to the full; but to the end, that men seeing his good works, may glorify God by his example. And the rather perhaps, for that David was a king, and the king's example prevails much with the people, to make them pay their vows to God: but most of all, that by this means David's piety may not be barren, but may make a breed of piety in the people also: which may be one mystical reason why it was counted a curse in Israel to be barren; for he that pays not his vows to God in the presence of his people may well be said to be barren in Israel, seeing he begets no children to God by his example. And perhaps, also, the vows which David means here were the doing of some mean things, unfit in show for the dignity of a king; as when it was thought a base thing in him to dance before the ark; he then vowed he would be baser yet: and in this case, to pay his vows before the people becomes a matter of necessity: for as there is no honour to a man whilst he is by himself alone, so there is no shame to a man but before the people: and therefore to shew that he is not ashamed to do any thing how mean soever, so it may tend to the glorifying of God; "*he will pay his vows in the presence of all his people.*" And he will do it though it cost him his life, for if he die for it he knows that "*Precious in the sight of the* LORD *is the death of his saints.*" But that which is precious is commonly desired: and doth God then desire the death of his saints? He desires, no doubt, that death of his saints which is to die to sin: but for any other death of his saints, it is therefore said to be precious in his sight, because he lays it up with the greater carefulness. And for this it is there are such several mansions in God's house, that to them whose death is precious in his sight he may assign the most glorious mansions. This indeed is the reward of martyrdom, and the encouragement of martyrs, though their sufferings be most insufferable, their troubles most intolerable; yet this makes amends for all; that "*Precious in the sight of the* LORD *is the death of his saints.*" For if it be so great a happiness to be acceptable in his sight, how great a happiness must it be to be precious in his sight? When God, at the creation looked upon all his works, it is said he saw them to be all exceeding good: but it is not said that any of them were precious in his sight. How then comes death to be precious in his sight, that was none of his works, but is a destroyer of his works? Is it possible that a thing which destroys his creatures should have a title of more value in his sight, than his creatures themselves? O, my soul, this is one of the miracles of his saints, and perhaps one of those which Christ meant, when he said to his apostles, that greater miracles than he did they should do themselves: for what greater miracle than this, that death, which of itself is a thing most vile in the sight of God, yet once embraced by his saints, as it were by their touch only, becomes precious in his sight? To alter a thing from being vile to be precious, is it not a greater miracle than to turn water into wine? Indeed so it is; death doth not damnify his saints, but his saints do dignify death. Death takes nothing away from his saints' happiness, but his saints add lustre to death's vileness. It is happy for death that ever it met with any of God's saints; for there was no way for it else in the world, to be ever had in any account: but why say I, in the world? For it is of no account in the world for all this: it is but only in the sight of God; but indeed this only is all in all; for to be precious in God's sight is more to be prized than the world itself. For when the world shall pass away, and all the glory of it be laid in the dust; then shall trophies be erected for the death of his saints: and when all monuments of the world shall be utterly defaced, and all records quite rased out; yet the death of his saints shall stand registered still, in fair red letters in the calendar of heaven. If there be glory laid up for them that die in the Lord; much more shall they be glorified that die for the Lord.

I have wondered oftentimes, why God will suffer his saints to die; I mean

not the death natural, for I know *statutum est omnibus semel mori;* but the death that is by violence, and with torture: for who could endure to see them he loves so cruelly handled? But now I see the reason of it; for, "*Precious in the sight of the* LORD *is the death of his saints.*" And what marvel then if he suffer his saints to die; when by dying they are wrought, and made fit jewels to be set in his cabinet; for as God has a bottle which he fills up with the tears of his saints, so I may say he hath a cabinet which he decks up with the deaths of his saints: and, O my soul, if thou couldst but comprehend what a glory it is to serve for a jewel in the decking up of God's cabinet, thou wouldest never wonder why he suffers his saints to be put to death, though with never so great torments, for it is but the same which Saint Paul saith: "The afflictions of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed."—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 12.—"*What shall I render unto the* LORD?" Rendering to the true God, in a true and right manner, is the sum of true religion. This notion is consonant to the scriptures: thus: "Render unto God the things that are God's." Matt. xxii. 21. As true loyalty is a giving to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, so true piety is the giving to God the things that are God's. And so, in that parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, all we owe to God is expressed by the *rendering the fruit of the vineyard;* Matt. xxi. 41. Particular acts of religion are so expressed in the Scriptures, Psalm lvi. 12; Hosea xiv. 2; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. Let this, then, be the import of David's מַה־אָשִׁיב לַיהוָה, "*What shall I render unto the* LORD?" "In what things, and by what means, shall I promote religion in the exercise thereof? How shall I show myself duly religious towards him who hath been constantly and abundantly munificent in his benefits towards me?"—*Henry Hurst.*

Verse 12.—"*All his benefits toward me.*" What reward shall we give unto the Lord, for all the benefits he hath bestowed? From the cheerless gloom of non-existence he waked us into being; he ennobled us with understanding; he taught us arts to promote the means of life; he commanded the prolific earth to yield its nurture; he bade the animals to own us as their lords. For us the rains descend; for us the sun sheddeth abroad its creative beams; the mountains rise, the valleys bloom, affording us grateful habitation and a sheltering retreat. For us the rivers flow; for us the fountains murmur; the sea opens its bosom to admit our commerce; the earth exhausts its stores; each new object presents a new enjoyment; all nature pouring her treasures at our feet, through the bounteous grace of him who wills that all be ours.—*Basil,* 326—379.

Verse 12.—"*All his benefits.*" As partial obedience is not good, so partial thanks is worthless: not that any saint is able to keep all the commands, or reckon up all the mercies of God, much less return particular acknowledgment for every single mercy; but as he "hath respect unto all the commandments" (Ps. cxix. 6), so he desires to value highly every mercy, and to his utmost power give God the praise of all. An honest soul would not conceal any debt he owes to God, but calls upon itself to give an account for all his benefits. The skipping over one note in a lesson may spoil the grace of the music; unthankfulness for one mercy disparageth our thanks for the rest.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 13.—"*I will take the cup of salvation.*"—It may probably allude to the libation offering, Numb. xxviii. 7; for the three last verses seem to intimate that the Psalmist was now at the temple, offering the meat-offering, drink-offering, and sacrifices to the Lord. "*Cup*" is often used by the Hebrews to denote plenty or abundance. So, "the cup of trembling," an abundance of *misery;* "the cup of salvation," an abundance of *happiness.*—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 13.—"*Cup of salvation.*" In holy Scripture there is mention made of drink-offerings, Gen. xxv. 14; Levit. xxiii. 13; Num. xv. 5; which were a certain quantity of wine that used to be poured out before the Lord; as the

very notation of the word importeth, coming from a root נָסַךְ, *effudit*, that signifieth to pour out. As the meat-offerings, so the drink-offerings, were brought to the Lord in way of gratulation and thanksgiving. Some therefore in allusion hereunto so expound the text, as a promise and vow of the psalmist, to testify his public gratitude by such an external and solemn rite as in the law was prescribed. This he termeth *a cup*, because that drink-offering was contained in a cup and poured out thereof; and he adds this epithet, "salvation," because that rite was an acknowledgment of salvation, preservation and deliverance from the Lord.

After their solemn gratulatory sacrifices they were wont to have a feast. When David had brought the ark of God into the tabernacle, they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, which being finished, "he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine." 1 Chron. xvi. 3. Hereby is implied that he made so beautiful a feast, as he had to give thereof to all the people there assembled. In this feast the master thereof was wont to take a great cup, and in lifting it up to declare the occasion of that feast, and then in testimony of thankfulness to drink thereof to the guests, that they in order might pledge him. This was called a cup of salvation, or deliverance, because they acknowledged by the use thereof that God had saved and delivered them. Almost in a like sense the apostle styleth the sacramental cup, the cup of blessing. Here the prophet useth the plural number, thus, "cup of *salvations*," whereby, after the Hebrew elegancy, he meaneth many deliverances, one after another; or some great and extraordinary deliverance which was instead of many, or which comprised many under it. The word translated *take* (אֶשָּׂא *a* נָשָׂא) properly signifieth to lift up, and in that respect may the more fitly be applied to the forementioned taking of the festival cup and lifting it up before the guests. Most of our later expositors of this psalm apply this phrase, "I will take the cup of salvation," to the forenamed gratulatory drink-offering, or to the taking and lifting up of the cup of blessing in the feast, after the solemn sacrifice. Both of these import one and the same thing, which is, that saints of old were wont to testify their gratefulness for great deliverances with some outward solemn rite.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 13.—"*Cup of salvation.*" *Yeshuoth:* Ps. xviii. 50, xxviii. 8, liii. 6. The *cup* of salvation, symbolized by the eucharistic cup of the Passover Supper. —Zion that had drunk of the "cup of trembling" (Isai. li. 17, 22) might now rise and drink of the cup of salvation.

To the church these words have had a yet deeper significancy added to them by St. Matt. xxvi. 27. Jesus, on that Passover night, drank of the bitter wine of God's wrath, that he might refill the cup with joy and health for his people.—*William Kay.*

Verses 13, 14, 17—19.—A fit mode of expressing our thanks to God is by solemn acts of worship, secret, social, and public. "The closet will be the first place where the heart will delight in pouring forth its lively joys; thence the feeling will extend to the family altar; and thence again it will proceed to the sanctuary of the Most High." (*J. Morison*). To every man God has sent a large supply of benefits, and nothing but perverseness can deny to him the praise of our lips.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 14.—A man that would have his credit as to the truth of his word kept up, would choose those to be witnesses of his performing who were witnesses of his promising. I think David took this heed in his rendering and paying his vows: "*I will do it*," saith he, "*now in the presence of all his people.*" The people were witnesses to his straits, prayers, and vows; and he will honour religion by performing in their sight what he sealed, signed, and delivered as his vow to the Lord. Seek not more witnesses than providence makes conscious of thy vows, lest this be interpreted ostentation and vain self-glorying: take so many, lest the good example be lost, or thou suspected of falsifying thy vow.

Briefly and plainly: Didst thou on a sick bed make thy vow before thy family, and before the neighbourhood? Be careful to perform it before them; let them see thou art what thou vowedst to be. This care in thy vow will be a means to make it most to the advantage of religion, whilst all that heard or knew thy vow bear thee testimony that thou art thankful, and thus thou givest others occasion to glorify thy Father who is in heaven.—*Henry Hurst* (1690) *in* "*The Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 14.—"*I will pay my vows,*" etc. Foxe, in his Acts and Monuments, relates the following concerning the martyr, John Philpot:—"He went with the sheriffs to the place of execution; and when he was entering into Smithfield the way was foul, and two officers took him up to bear him to the stake. Then he said merrily, What, will ye make me a pope? I am content to go to my journey's end on foot. But first coming into Smithfield, he kneeled down there, saying these words, "I will pay my vows in thee, O Smithfield."

Verse 15.—"*Precious in the sight of the* LORD *is the death of his saints.*" It is of value or importance in such respects as the following:—(1) As it is the removal of another of the redeemed to glory—the addition of one more to the happy hosts above; (2) as it is a new triumph of the work of redemption,—showing the power and the value of that work; (3) as it often furnishes a more direct proof of the reality of religion than any abstract argument could do. How much has the cause of religion been promoted by the patient deaths of Ignatius, Polycarp, and Latimer, and Ridley, and Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and the hosts of martyrs! What does not the world owe, and the cause of religion owe, to such scenes as occurred on the death-beds of Baxter, and Thomas Scott, and Halyburton, and Payson! What an argument for the truth of religion,—what an illustration of its sustaining power,—what a source of comfort to those who are about to die,—to reflect that religion does not leave the believer when he most needs its support and consolation; that it can sustain us in the severest trial of our condition here; that it can illuminate what seems to us of all places *most* dark, cheerless, dismal, repulsive—"the valley of the shadow of death."—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 15.—"*Precious in the sight of the* LORD *is the death of his saints.*" The death of the saints is precious in the Lord's sight. First, because *he* "*seeth not as man seeth.*" He judgeth not according to the appearance; he sees all things as they really are, not partially: he traces the duration of his people, not upon the map of time, but upon the infinite scale of eternity; he weighs their happiness, not in the little balance of earthly enjoyment, but in the even and equipoised balance of the sanctuary. In the next place, I think the death of the saints is precious in the Lord's sight, because *they are taken from the evil to come;* they are delivered from the burden of the flesh; ransomed by the blood of the Redeemer, they are his purchased possession, and now he receives them to himself. Sin and sorrow for ever cease; there is no more death, the death of Christ is their redemption; by death he overcame him that had the power of death; therefore, they in him are enabled to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Again, the death of the saints is precious in the Lord's sight, for in it *he often sees the very finest evidences of the work of his own Spirit upon the soul;* he sees faith in opposition to sense, leaning upon the promises of God. Reposing upon him who is mighty to save, he sees hope even against hope, anchoring the soul secure and steadfast on him who is passed within the veil; he sees patience acquiescing in a Father's will—humility bending beneath his sovereign hand—love issuing from a grateful heart. Again, the death of the saints is precious in the Lord's sight, *as it draws out the tendernesses of surviving Christian friends,* and is abundant in the thanksgivings of many an anxious heart; it elicits the sympathies of Christian charity, and realises that communion of saints, of which the Apostle speaks, when he says, "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one rejoice they all joy." . . . . The death of saints is precious, because the

sympathy of prayer is poured forth from many a kindly Christian heart. . . . Nor is this all—the death of saints is precious, for *that is their day of seeing Jesus face to face.—Patrick Pounden's Sermon in "The Irish Pulpit,"* 1831.

Verse 15.—"*Precious.*" Their death is precious (*jakar*); the word of the text is, *in pretio fuit, magni estimatum est.* See how the word is translated in other texts. 1. Honourable, Isai. xliii. 4 (*jakarta*); "thou was precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable." 2. Much set by, 1 Sam. xviii. 30: "His name was much set by." 3. Dear, Jer. xxxi. 20. *An filius* (*jakkir*) *pretiosus mihi Ephraim:* "Is Ephraim my dear son?" 4. Splendid, clear, or glorious, Job xxxi. 16. *Si vidi lunam* (*jaker*) *pretiosam et abeuntem:* "the moon walking in brightness."

Put all these expressions together, and then we have the strength of David's word, "*The death of the saints is precious*"; that is, 1. honourable; 2. much set by; 3. dear; 4. splendid and glorious in the sight of the Lord.—*Samuel Torshell, in "The House of Mourning,"* 1660.

Verse 15.—"*Precious.*" It is proper to advert, in the first place, to the apparent primary import of the phrase, namely, *Almighty God watches over, and sets a high value upon the holy and useful lives of his people*, and will not lightly allow these lives to be abbreviated or destroyed. In the second place, the words lead us to advert to *the control which he exercises over the circumstances of their death.* These are under his special arrangement. They are too important in his estimation to be left to accident. In fact, chance has no existence. In the intervention of second causes, he takes care always to overrule and control them for good. Let the weakest believer among you be quite sure, be "confident of this very thing," that he will never suffer your great enemy to take advantage of anything in the manner of your death, to do you spiritual harm. No, on the contrary, he takes all its circumstances under his immediate and especial disposal. This sentiment will admit, perhaps, of a third illustration; *when the saints are dying, the Lord looks upon them, and is merciful unto them.* Who can say how often he answers prayer, even in the cases of dying believers? Never does he fail to support, even where he does not see good to spare. By the whispers of his love, by the witness of his Spirit, by the assurance of his presence, by the preparatory revelation of heavenly glory, he strengthens his afflicted ones, he makes all their bed in their sickness. Ah! and when, perhaps, they scarcely possess a bed to languish upon, when poverty or other calamitous circumstances leave them, in the sorrow of sickness, no place of repose but the bare ground for their restless bodies, and his bosom for their spirits, do they ever find God fail them? No; many a holy man has slept the sleep of death with the missionary Martyn, in a strange and inhospitable land, or with the missionary Smith, upon the floor of a dungeon, and yet

> "Jesus has made their dying bed
> As soft as downy pillows are."

When no other eye saw, when no other heart felt, for these two never-to-be-forgotten martyrs, murdered men of God, and apostles of Jesus, then were they precious in God's sight, and he was present with them. And so it is with all his saints, who are faithful unto death. Fourthly, we are warranted by the text and the tenor of Scripture, in affirming that *the Lord attaches great importance to the death-bed itself.* This is in his estimate—whatever it may be in ours—too precious, too important, to be overlooked; and hence it is often with emphasis, though always with a practical bearing, recorded in Scripture. It is possible, certainly, to make too much of it, by substituting, as a criterion of character, that which may be professed under the excitement of dying sufferings, for the testimony of a uniform, conspicuous career of holy living. But it is equally indefensible, and even ungrateful to God, to make too little of it, to make too little account of a good end, when connected with a good beginning and with a patient continuance in well-doing.

> "The chamber where the good man meets his fate
> Is privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life."

Its transactions are sometimes as fraught with permanent utility as with present good. The close of a Christian's career on earth, his defiance, in the strength of his Saviour, of his direst enemy, the good confession which he acknowledges when he is enabled to witness before those around his dying bed, all these are precious and important in the sight of the Lord, and ought to be so in our view, and redound, not only to his own advantage, but to the benefit of survivors, "to the praise of the glory of his grace."—*W. M. Bunting, in a Sermon at the City Road Chapel*, 1836.

Verse 15.—Why need they beforehand be afraid of death, who have the Lord to take such care about it as he doth? We may safely, without presuming, we ought securely without wavering, to rest upon this, that our blood being precious in God's eyes, either it shall not be spilt, or it is seasonable, and shall be profitable to us to have it spilt. On this ground "the righteous are bold as a lion," Prov. xxviii. 1. "Neither do they fear what man can do unto them." Heb. xiii. 6. Martyrs were, without question, well instructed herein, and much supported hereby. When fear of death hindereth from any duty, or draweth to any evil, then call to mind this saying, "*Precious in the sight of the* LORD *is the death of his favourites.*" For who would not valiantly, without fainting, take such a death as is precious in God's sight?—*William Gouge.*

Verse 15.—"*His saints*" imports *appropriation.* Elsewhere Jehovah asserts, "All souls are mine." But he has an especial property in—and therefore claim upon—all saints. It is he that made them such. Separate from God there could be no sanctity. And as his right, his original right, in all men, is connected with the facts of their having been created and endowed by his hand, and thence subjected to his moral government, so, and much more, do all holy beings, all holy men, who owe to his grace their very existence as such, who must cease to be saints, if they could cease to be *his* saints, whom he has created anew in Christ Jesus by the communication of his own love, his own purity, his own nature, whom he continually upholds in this exalted state, so, and much more, do such persons belong to God. They are "*his* saints," through him and in him, saints of his making, and modelling, and establishing, and therefore *his* exclusively. Let this reference to the mighty working of God by his Spirit in you, your connection, your spiritual connection, with him, and your experience of his saving power,—let this reference convert the *mystery* into the *mercy* of sanctification in your hearts.

"*His* saints" denotes, in the second place, *devotedness.* They are saints not only *through* him, but *to* him; holy unto the Lord, sanctified or set apart to his service, self-surrendered to the adorable Redeemer.

"*His* saints" may import *resemblance*—close resemblance. Such characters are emphatically *God-like*, holy and pure; children of their Father which is in heaven; certifying to all around their filial relationship to him, by their manifest participation of his nature, by their reflection of his image and likeness.

"*His* saints" suggests associations of *endearment*, of complacency. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in all them that hope in his mercy"; "a people near unto him"; "the Lord's portion is his people"; and "Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."—*Condensed from a Sermon by W. M. Bunting*, 1836.

Verse 15.—"*Saints.*" The persons among whom implicitly he reckons himself, styled *saints*, are in the original set out by a word (חֲסִידִים) that importeth an especial respect of God towards them. The root whence that word issueth signifieth *mercy* (חָסַד *consecravit, benefecit*). Whereupon the Hebrews have given such a name to a stork, which kind among fowls is the most merciful; and that not only the old to their young ones, as most are, but also the young ones to the old, which they use to feed and carry when through age they are not able to help themselves.

This title is attributed to men in a double respect; 1. Passively, in regard of God's mind and affection to them; 2. Actively, in regard of their mind and affection to others. God's merciful kindness is great towards them; and their

mercy and kindness are great towards their brethren. They are, therefore, by a kind of excellency and property styled "men of mercy." Isai. lvii. 1. In regard of this double acceptation of the word, some translate it, "merciful, tender, or courteous," Ps. xviii. 25. Others with a paraphrase with many words, because they have not one fit word to express the full sense, thus, "Those whom God followeth with bounty, or to whom God extendeth his bounty." This latter I take to be the most proper to this place; for the word being passively taken for such as are made partakers of God's kindness, it sheweth the reason of that high account wherein God hath them, even his own grace and favour. We have a word in English that in this passive signification fitly answereth the Hebrew, which is this, *favourite.*—*William Gouge.*

Verse 15.—*Death* now, as he hath done also to mine, has paid full many a visit to your house; and in very deed, he has made fell havoc among our comforts. We shall yet be avenged on this enemy—this King of Terrors. I cannot help at times clenching my fist in his face, and roaring out in my agony and anguish, "Thou shalt be swallowed up in victory!" There is even, too, in the meantime, this consolation; "O Death, where is thy sting?" "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death *for* his saints," in the first place; in the second place, and resting on the propitiatory death, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death *of* his saints." The Holy Ghost, Psalm cxvi. 15, states the first; our translators, honest men, have very fairly and truly inferred the second. We are obliged to them. The death of your lovely child, loveliest in the beauties of holiness, with all that was most afflictive and full of sore trial in it, is nevertheless, among the things in your little family, which are right precious in the sight of the Lord; and this in it, is that which pleases you most; precious, because of the infinite, the abiding, and the unchanging worth of the death of God's own holy child Jesus. The calm so wonderful, the consolation so felt, yea, the joy in tribulation so great, have set before your eyes a new testimony, heart-touching indeed, that, after eighteen hundred years have passed, "*the death of his saints*" is still precious as ever in the sight of the Lord. Take your book of life, sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, and in your family record, put the death of Rosanna down among the precious things in your sight also—I should rather have said likewise.

Present my kindest regards to Miss S—. Tell her to wipe that tear away—Rosanna needs it not. I hope they are all well at L—, and that your young men take the way of the Lord in good part. My dear Brother, "Go thy way, thy child liveth," is still as fresh as ever it was, from the lips of Him that liveth for ever and ever, and rings with a loftier and sweeter sound, even than when it was first heard in the ears and heart of the parent who had brought and laid his sick and dying at the feet of Him who hath the keys of hell and of death.—*John Jameson, in "Letters; True Fame," etc.*, 1838.

Verse 16.—"*O* Lord, *truly I am thy servant.*" Thou hast made me free, and I am impatient to be bound again. Thou hast broken the bonds of sin; now, Lord, bind me with the cords of love. Thou hast delivered me from the tyranny of Satan, make me as one of thy hired servants. I owe my liberty, my life, and all that I have, or hope, to thy generous rescue: and now, O my gracious, my Divine Friend and Redeemer, I lay myself and my all at thy feet.—*Samuel Lavington*, 1728—1807.

Verse 16.—"*I am thy servant.*" The saints have ever had a holy pride in being God's servants; there cannot be a greater honour than to serve such a Master as commands heaven, earth, and hell. Do not think thou dost honour God in serving him; but this is how God honours thee, in vouchsafing thee to be his servant. David could not study to give himself a greater style than—"O Lord, or, truly I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid," and this he spake, not in the phrase of a human compliment, but in the humble confession of a believer. Yea, so doth the apostle commend this excellency, that he sets the title of servant before that of an apostle; first servant, then apostle. Great was his

office in being an apostle, greater his blessing in being a servant of Jesus Christ; the one is an outward calling, the other an inward grace. There was an apostle condemned, never any servant of God.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 16.—"*I am thy servant.*" This expression of the king of Israel implies (1.) *A humble sense of his distance from God and his dependence upon him.* This is the first view which a penitent hath of himself when he returns to God. It is the first view which a good man hath of himself in his approaches to, or communion with God. And, indeed, it is what ought to be inseparable from the exercise of every other pious affection. To have, as it were, high and honourable thoughts of the majesty and greatness of the living God, and a deep and awful impression of the immediate and continual presence of the heart-searching God, this naturally produces the greatest self-abasement, and the most unfeigned subjection of spirit before our Maker. It leads to a confession of him as Lord over all, and having the most absolute right, not only to the obedience, but to the disposal of all his creatures. I cannot help thinking this is conveyed to us in the language of the psalmist, when he says, "*O* LORD, *truly I am thy servant.*" He was a prince among his subjects, and had many other honourable distinctions, both natural and acquired, among men; but he was sensible of his being a servant and subject of the King of kings; and the force of his expression, "*Truly, I am thy servant,*" not only signifies the certainty of the thing, but how deeply and strongly he felt a conviction of its truth.

This declaration of the psalmist implies (2) *a confession of his being bound by particular covenant and consent unto God,* and a repetition of the same by a new adherence. This, as it was certainly true with regard to him, having often dedicated himself to God, so I take it to be confirmed by the reiteration of the expression here, "*O* LORD, *truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant.*" As if he had said, "O Lord, it is undeniable; it is impossible to recede from it. I am thine by many ties. I am by nature thy subject and thy creature; and I have many times confessed thy right and promised my own duty." I need not mention to you, either the example in the psalmist's writings, or the occasions in his history, on which he solemnly surrendered himself to God. It is sufficient to say, that it was very proper that he should frequently call this to mind, and confess it before God, for though it could not make his Creator's right any stronger, it would certainly make the guilt of his own violation of it so much the greater.

This declaration of the psalmist is (3) *an expression of his peculiar and special relation to God.* "*I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.*" There is another passage of his writings where the same expression occurs: Ps. lxxxvi. 16. "O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid." There is some variation among interpreters in the way of illustrating this phrase. Some take it for a figurative way of affirming, that he was bound in the strongest manner to God, as those children who were born of a maid-servant, and born in his own house, were in the most absolute manner their master's property. Others take it to signify his being not only brought up in the visible church of God, but in a pious family, and educated in his fear; and others would have it to signify still more especially that the psalmist's mother was an eminently pious woman. And indeed I do not think that was a circumstance, if true, either unworthy of him to remember, or of the Spirit of God to put upon record.—*John Witherspoon,* 1722—1797.

Verse 16.—O Lord, *I am thy servant,* by a double right; (and, oh, that I could do thee double service;) as thou art the Lord of my life, and I am the son of thy handmaid: not of Hagar, but of Sarah; not of the bondwoman, but of the free; and therefore I serve thee not in fear, but in love; or therefore in fear, because in love: and then is service best done when it is done in love. In love indeed I am bound to serve thee, for, "*Thou hast loosed my bonds*"; the bonds of death which compassed me about, by delivering me from a dangerous sickness, and restoring me to health: or in a higher kind;

thou hast loosed my bonds by freeing me from being a captive to be a servant; and which is more, from being a servant to be a son: and more than this, from being a son of thy handmaid, to be a son of thyself.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 16.—Bless God for the privilege of being the children of godly parents. Better be the child of a godly than of a wealthy parent. I hope none of you are of so vile a spirit as to contemn your parents because of their piety. Certainly it is a great privilege when you can go to God, and plead your Father's covenant: "LORD, *truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid.*" So did Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 25, 26, "Lord, make good thy word to thy servant David, my father." That you are not born of infidels, nor of papists, nor of upholders of superstition and formality, but in a strict, serious, godly family, it is a great advantage that you have. It is better to be the sons of faithful ministers than of nobles.—*Thomas Manton, in a Sermon preached before the Sons of the Clergy.*

Verse 16.—"*Thou hast loosed my bonds.*" Mercies are given to encourage us in God's service, and should be remembered to that end. Rain descends upon the earth, not that it might be more barren, but more fertile. We are but stewards; the mercies we enjoy are not our own, but to be improved for our Master's service. Great mercies should engage to great obedience. God begins the Decalogue with a memorial of his mercy in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt,—"I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." How affectionately doth the psalmist own his relation to God as his servant, when he considers how God had loosed his bonds: "*O* LORD, *truly I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds!*" the remembrance of thy mercy shall make me know no relation but that of a servant to thee. When we remember what wages we have from God, we must withal remember that we owe more service, and more liveliness in service, to him. Duty is but the ingenuous consequent of mercy. It is irrational to encourage ourselves in our way to hell by a remembrance of heaven, to foster a liberty in sin by a consideration of God's bounty. When we remember that all we have or are is the gift of God's liberality, we should think ourselves obliged to honour him with all that we have, for he is to have honour from all his gifts. It is a sign we aimed at God's glory in begging mercy, when we also aim at God's glory in enjoying it. It is a sign that love breathed the remembrance of mercy into our hearts, when at the same time it breathes a resolution into us to improve it. It is not our tongues, but our lives must praise him. Mercies are not given to one member, but to the whole man.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 17.—"*The sacrifice of thanksgiving.*"

> "When all the heart is pure, each warm desire
> Sublimed by holy love's ethereal fire,
> On winged words our breathing thoughts may rise,
> And soar to heaven, a grateful sacrifice."
>
> *James Scott.*

Verse 18.—"*Vows.*" Are well-composed vows such promoters of religion? and are they to be made so warily? and do they bind so strictly? Then be sure to wait until God give you just and fit seasons for vowing. Be not overhasty to vow: it is an inconsiderate and foolish haste of Christians to make more occasions of vowing than God doth make for them. Make your vows, and spare not, so often as God bids you; but do not do it oftener. You would wonder I should dissuade you from vowing often, when you have such constant mercies; and wonder well you might, if God did expect your extraordinary bond and security for every ordinary mercy: but he requires it not; he is content with ordinary security of gratitude for ordinary mercies; when he calls for extraordinary security and acknowledgment, by giving extraordinary mercies, then give it and do it.—*Henry Hurst.*

Verse 18.—"*Now.*"—God gave an order that no part of the thankoffering

should be kept till the third day, to teach us to present our praises when benefits are newly received, which else would soon wax stale and putrefy as fish doth. "*I will pay my vows now*," saith David.—*Samuel Clarke* (1599—1682) *in* "*A Mirrour or Looking-glasse, both for Saints and Sinners.*"

Verse 18.—"*In the presence of all his people.*" For good example's sake. This also was prince-like, Ezek. xlvi. 10. The king's seat in the sanctuary was open, that all might see him there, 2 Kings xi. 14, and xxiii. 3.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 18.—"*In the presence of all his people.*" Be bold, be bold, ye servants of the Lord, in sounding forth the praises of your God. Go into presses of people; and in the midst of them praise the Lord. Wicked men are over-bold in pouring forth their blasphemies to the dishonour of God; they care not who hear them. They stick not to do it in the midst of cities. Shall they be more audacious to dishonour God, than ye zealous to honour him? Assuredly Christ will shew himself as forward to confess you, as you are, or can be to confess him. Matt. x. 32. This holy boldness is the ready way to glory.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 19 (*second clause*).—He does not simply say in the midst of Jerusalem: but, "*in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.*" He speaks to the city as one who loved it and delighted in it. We see here, how the saints were affected towards the city in which was the house of God. Thus we should be moved in spirit towards that church in which God dwells, the temple he inhabits, which is built up, not of stones, but of the souls of the faithful.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verses 1, 2.—I. Present—"I love." II. Past—"He hath." III. Future—"I will."

Verses 1, 2.—Personal experience in reference to prayer. I. We have prayed, often, constantly, in different ways, &c. II. We have been heard. A grateful retrospect of usual answers and of special answers. III. Love to God has thus been promoted. IV. Our sense of the value of prayer has become so intense that we cannot cease praying.

Verses 1, 2, 9.—If you cast your eyes on the first verse of the psalm, you find a *profession of love*—"*I love the* LORD"; if on the second, a *promise of prayer*—"*I will call on the* LORD"; if on the ninth, a *resolve of walking*—"*I will walk before the* LORD." There are three things should be the object of a saint's care, the devotion of the soul, profession of the mouth, and conversation of the life: that is the sweetest melody in God's ears, when not only the voice sings, but the heartstrings keep tune, and the hand keepeth time.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 2.—"He hath," and therefore "I will." Grace moving to action.

Verses 2, 4, 13, 17.—Calling upon God mentioned four times very suggestively—I will do it (verse 2), I have tried it (4), I will do it when I take (13), and when I offer (17).

Verses 2, 9, 13, 14, 17.—The "I wills" of the Psalm. I will call (verse 2), I will walk (9), I will take (13), I will pay (14), I will offer (17).

Verses 3, 4, 8.—See Spurgeon's Sermon, "To Souls in Agony," Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No 1216.

Verses 3—5.—The story of a tried soul. I. Where I was. Verse 3. II. What I did. Verse 4. III. What I learned. Verse 5.

Verses 3—6.—I. *The occasion.* 1. Bodily affliction. 2. Terrors of conscience. 3. Sorrow of heart. 4. Self-accusation: "I found," etc. II. *The petition.* 1.

Direct: "I called," etc. 2. Immediate: "then," when the trouble came; prayer was the first remedy sought, not the last, as with many. 3. Brief—limited to the one thing needed: "deliver my soul." 4. Importunate: "O Lord, I beseech thee." III. *The restoration.* 1. Implied: "gracious," etc., v. 5. 2. Expressed, v. 6, generally: "The Lord preserveth," etc.; particularly; "I was brought low," etc.: helped me to pray, helped me out of trouble in answer to prayer, and helped me to praise him for the mercy, the faithfulness, the grace, shown in my deliverance. God is glorified through the afflictions of his people: the submissive are preserved in them, and the lowly are exalted by them.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—I. Eternal grace, or the purpose of love. II. Infinite justice, or the difficulty of holiness. III. Boundless mercy, or the outcome of atonement.

Verse 6.—I. A singular class—"simple." II. A singular fact—"the Lord preserveth the simple." III. A singular proof of the fact—"I was," &c.

Verse 7.—"*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*" Rest in God may be said to belong to the people of God on a fourfold account. I. By designation. The rest which the people of God have in him is the result of his own purpose and design, taken up from his mere good pleasure and love. II. By purchase. The rest which they wanted as *creatures* they had forfeited as *sinners*. This, therefore, Christ laid down his life to procure. III. By promise. This is God's kind engagement. He has said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," Exod. xxxiii. 14. IV. By their own choice gracious souls have a rest in God.—*D. Wilcox.*

Verse 7.—"*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*" When, or upon what occasion a child of God should use the psalmist's language. I. After converse with the world in the business of his calling every day. II. When going to the sanctuary on the Lord's-day. III. In and under any trouble he may meet with. IV. When departing from this world at death.—*D. Wilcox.*

Verse 7.—I. The rest of the soul: "My rest," this is in God. 1. The soul was created to find its rest in God. 2. On that account it cannot find rest elsewhere. II. Its departure from that rest. This is implied in the word "Return." III. Its return. 1. By repentance. 2. By faith, in the way provided for its return. 3. By prayer. IV. Its encouragement to return. 1. Not in itself, but in God. 2. Not in the justice, but in the goodness of God: "for the Lord," etc. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."—*G. R.*

Verse 8.—The trinity of experimental godliness. I. It is a unity—"Thou hast delivered"; all the mercies come from one source. II. It is a trinity of deliverance, *of* soul, eyes, feet; *from* punishment, sorrow, and sinning; *to* life, joy, and stability. III. It is a trinity in unity: all this was done for me and in me—"my soul, mine eyes, my feet."

Verse 9.—The effect of deliverance upon ourselves: "I will walk," etc. I. Walk by faith in him. II. Walk in love with him. III. Walk by obedience to him.—*G. R.*

Verses 10, 11.—I. The rule: "I believed," etc. In general the psalmist spoke what he had well considered and tested by his own experience, as when he said, "I was brought low and he helped me." "The Lord hath dealt bountifully with me." II. The exception; "I was greatly afflicted, I said," etc. 1. He spoke wrongfully: he said "All men are liars," which had some truth in it, but was not the whole truth. 2. Hastily: "I said in my haste," without due reflection. 3. Angrily, under the influence of affliction, probably from the unfaithfulness of others. Nature acts before grace—the one by instinct, the other from consideration.—*G. R.*

Verse 11.—A hasty speech. I. There was much truth in it. II. It erred on the right side, for it showed faith in God rather than in the creature. III. It did err in being too sweeping, too severe, too suspicious. IV. It was soon cured. The remedy for all such hasty speeches is—Get to work in the spirit of verse 12.

Verse 12.—Overwhelming obligations. I. A sum in arithmetic—"all his benefits." II. A calculation of indebtedness—"What shall I render?" III. A problem for personal solution—"What shall *I*?" See Spurgeon's Sermon, No. 910.

Verses 12, 14.—Whether well-composed religious vows do not exceedingly promote religion. Sermon by Henry Hurst, A.M., in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 13.—Sermon on the Lord's supper. We take the cup of the Lord—I. In memory of him who is our salvation. II. In token of our trust in him. III. In evidence of our obedience to him. IV. In type of communion with him. V. In hope of drinking it new with him ere long.

Verse 13.—The various cups mentioned in Scripture would make an interesting subject.

Verse 14.—"*Now.*" Or the excellence of time present.

Verse 15.—I. *The declaration.* Not the death of the wicked, nor even the death of the righteous is in itself precious; but, 1, because their persons are precious to him. 2. Because their experience in death is precious to him. 3. Because of their conformity in death to their Covenant-Head; and 4. Because it puts an end to their sorrows, and translates them to their rest. II. *Its manifestation.* 1. In preserving them from death. 2. In supporting them in death. 3. In giving them victory over death. 4. In glorifying them after death.

Verse 15.—See Spurgeon's Sermons "Precious Deaths," No. 1036.

Verse 16.—*Holy Service.* I. Emphatically avowed. II. Honestly rendered—"truly." III. Logically defended—"son of thine handmaid." IV. Consistent with conscious liberty.

Verse 17.—This is due to our God, good for ourselves, and encouraging to others.

Verse 17.—"*The sacrifice of thanksgiving.*" I. How it may be rendered. In secret love, in conversation, in sacred song, in public testimony, in special gifts and works. II. Why we should render it. For answered prayers (verses 1, 2), memorable deliverances (3), choice preservation (6); remarkable restoration (7, 8), and for the fact of our being his servants (16). III. When should we render it. *Now*, while the mercy is on the memory, and as often as fresh mercies come to us.

Verse 18.—I. How vows may be paid in public. By going to public worship as the first thing we do when health is restored. By uniting heartily in the song. By coming to the communion. By special thankoffering. By using fit opportunities for open testimony to the Lord's goodness. II. The special difficulty in the matter. To pay them *to the Lord*, and not in ostentation or as an empty form. III. The peculiar usefulness of the public act. It interests others, touches their hearts, reproves, encourages, &c.

Verse 19.—The Christian at home. I. In God's house. II. Among the saints. III. At his favourite work, "Praise."

WORKS ON THE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH PSALM.

Dauid's Harpe ful of most delectable armony newely stringed and set in tune by Thomas Becon. [This is an exposition of Psalm cxvi. 10—19, or Psalm cxv. according to the Latin Version. It was originally published in 12mo, in 1542, and reprinted in "The Early Works of Thomas Becon, S. T. P. Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, Prebendary of Canterbury, &c.," by "The Parker Society." 1843.]

An Exposition *vpon some select Psalmes of David, containing great store of most excellent and comfortable doctrine, and instruction for all those, that (under the burthen of sinne) thirst for comfort in Christ Jesus.* Written by

that faithfull servant of God, M. Robert Rollok, sometime Pastour in the Church of Edinburgh: And translated out of Latine into English, by C. L. [Charles Lumisden] *Minister of the Gospell of Christ at Dudingstoun.* [12mo.] Edinburgh . . . 1600. [Contains an Exposition of this Psalm.]

The Saints' Sacrifice: or, A Commentary on Psalm cxvi. Which is a gratulatory Psalm, for Deliverance from Deadly Distress. By William Gouge, D.D. London. 1631. [Reprinted, with S. Smith, on Psalm i., and T. Pierson, on Psalms xxvii., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., in Nichol's Series of Commentaries. 1868.]

Sermons Experimentall: on Psalmes cxvi. and cxvii. Very vsefull for A Wounded Spirit. By *William Slater*, D.D., sometimes Rector of *Linsham*, and Vicar of *Pitminster*, in Sommersetshire. Published by his Son William Slater, Mr. of Arts. . . . London: 1638 [4to.]

Meditations and Disquisitions upon Seven Consolatorie Psalmes of David: namely, The 23. The 27, The 30, The 34, The 84, The 103, The 116.—By *Sir Richard Baker, Knight.* London. 1640. [4to.]

Divine Drops Distilled from the Fountain of Holy Scriptures: Delivered in several Exercises before Sermons, upon Twenty-and-three Texts of Scripture. By that worthy Gospel Preacher *Gualter Cradock*, Late Preacher at All Hallows Great in London. . . 1650. [In this old quarto there is an Exposition of Psalm cxvi.; but it is almost wholly political, and worthless for our purpose; we mention it only as a caution, and to prevent disappointment.]

In "*The Golden Diary of Heart Converse with Jesus in the Book of Psalms.* —*By the Rev. Dr.* Edersheim, *Torquay*, 1873," there is a brief exposition of *vv.* 1—12 of this psalm.

PSALM CXVII.

SUBJECT.—*This psalm, which is very little in its letter, is exceedingly large in its spirit; for, bursting beyond all bounds of race or nationality, it calls upon all mankind to praise the name of the Lord. In all probability it was frequently used as a brief hymn suitable for almost every occasion, and especially when the time for worship was short. Perhaps it was also sung at the commencement or at the close of other psalms, just as we now use the doxology. It would have served either to open a service or to conclude it. It is both short and sweet. The same divine Spirit which expatiates in the 119th, here condenses his utterances into two short verses, but yet the same infinite fulness is present and perceptible. It may be worth noting that this is at once the shortest chapter of the Scriptures and the central portion of the whole Bible.*

EXPOSITION.

O PRAISE the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

1. "*O praise the* LORD, *all ye nations.*" This is an exhortation to the Gentiles to glorify Jehovah, and a clear proof that the Old Testament spirit differed widely from that narrow and contracted national bigotry with which the Jews of our Lord's day became so inveterately diseased. The nations could not be expected to join in the praise of Jehovah unless they were also to be partakers of the benefits which Israel enjoyed; and hence the psalm was an intimation to Israel that the grace and mercy of their God were not to be confined to one nation, but would in happier days be extended to all the race of man, even as Moses had prophesied when he said, "Rejoice, O ye nations, his people" (Deut. xxxii. 43), for so the Hebrew has it. The nations were to be his people. He would call them a people that were not a people, and her beloved that was not beloved. We know and believe that no one tribe of men shall be unrepresented in the universal song which shall ascend unto the Lord of all. Individuals have already been gathered out of every kindred and people and tongue by the preaching of the gospel, and these have right heartily joined in magnifying the grace which sought them out, and brought them to know the Saviour. These are but the advance-guard of a number which no man can number who will come ere long to worship the all-glorious One. "*Praise him, all ye people.*" Having done it once, do it again, and do it still more fervently, daily increasing in the reverence and zeal with which you extol the Most High. Not only praise him nationally by your rulers, but popularly in your masses. The multitude of the common folk shall bless the Lord. Inasmuch as the matter is spoken of twice, its certainty is confirmed, and the Gentiles must and shall extol Jehovah—all of them, without exception. Under the gospel dispensation we worship no new god, but the God of Abraham is our God for ever and ever; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.

2. "*For his merciful kindness is great toward us.*" By which is meant not only his great love toward the Jewish people, but towards the whole family of man. The Lord is kind to us as his creatures, and merciful to us as sinners, hence his merciful kindness to us as sinful creatures. This mercy has been very great, or powerful. The mighty grace of God has prevailed even as the waters of the flood prevailed over the earth: breaking over all bounds, it has flowed towards all portions of the multiplied race of man. In Christ Jesus, God has shown mercy mixed with kindness, and that to the very highest degree. We can all

join in this grateful acknowledgment, and in the praise which is therefore due. "*And the truth of the* LORD *endureth for ever.*" He has kept his covenant promise that in the seed of Abraham should all nations of the earth be blessed, and he will eternally keep every single promise of that covenant to all those who put their trust in him. This should be a cause of constant and grateful praise, wherefore the psalm concludes as it began, with another Hallelujah, "*Praise ye the* LORD."

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—A very short psalm if you regard the words, but of very great compass and most excellent if you thoughtfully consider the meaning. There are here five principal points of doctrine.

First, *the calling of the Gentiles*, the Apostle being the interpreter, Rom. xv. 11; but in vain might the Prophet invite the Gentiles to praise Jehovah, unless they were to be gathered into the unity of the faith together with the children of Abraham.

Second, *The summary of the Gospel*, namely, the manifestation of grace and truth, the Holy Spirit being the interpreter, John i. 17.

Third, *The end of so great a blessing*, namely, the worship of God in spirit and in truth, as we know that the kingdom of the Messiah is spiritual.

Fourth, *the employment of the subjects of the great King* is to praise and glorify Jehovah.

Lastly, *the privilege of these servants:* that, as to the Jews, so also to the Gentiles, who know and serve God the Saviour, eternal life and blessedness are brought, assured in this life, and prepared in heaven.—*Mollerus.*

Whole Psalm.—This psalm, the shortest portion of the Book of God, is quoted, and given much value to, in Rom. xv. And upon this it has been profitably observed, "It is a small portion of Scripture, and as such we might easily overlook it. But not so the Holy Ghost. He gleans up this precious little testimony which speaks of grace to the Gentiles, and presses it on our attention."—*From Bellett's Short Meditations on the Psalms, chiefly in their Prophetic character*, 1871.

Whole Psalm.—The occasion and the author of this psalm are alike unknown. De Wette regards it as *a Temple-psalm*, and agrees with Rosenmüller in the supposition that it was sung either at the beginning or the end of the service in the temple. Knapp supposes that it was used as an intermediate service, sung during the progress of the general service, to vary the devotion, and to awaken a new interest in the service, either sung by the choir or by the whole people.—*Albert Barnes.*

Whole Psalm.—In God's worship it is not always necessary to be long; few words sometimes say what is sufficient, as this short psalm giveth us to understand.—*David Dickson.*

Whole Psalm.—This is the shortest, and the next but one is the longest, of the Psalms. There are times for short hymns and long hymns, for short prayers and long prayers, for short sermons and long sermons, for short speeches and long speeches. It is better to be too short than too long, as it can more easily be mended. Short addresses need no formal divisions: long addresses require them, as in the next Psalm but one.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 1.—"*O praise the* LORD," etc. The praise of God is here made both the beginning and the end of the psalm; to show, that in praising God the saints are never satisfied with their own efforts, and would infinitely magnify him, even as his perfections are infinite. Here they make a circle, the beginning, middle, and end whereof is *hallelujah.* In the last psalm, when David had said, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord, and so in all likelihood had made an end, yet he repeats the *hallelujah* again, and cries, "Praise

ye the Lord." The psalmist had made an end and yet he had not done: to signify, that when we have said our utmost for God's praise, we must not be content, but begin anew. There is hardly any duty more pressed in the Old Testament upon us, though less practised, than this of praising God. To quicken us therefore to a duty so necessary, but so much neglected, this and many other psalms were penned by David, purposely to excite us, that are the *nations* here meant, to consecrate our whole lives to the singing and setting forth of God's worthy praises.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 1.—"*All ye nations.*" Note: each nation of the world has some special gift bestowed on it by God, which is not given to the others, whether you have regard to nature or grace, for which it ought to praise God.—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 1.—"*Praise him.*" A different word is here used for "praise" than in the former clause: a word which is more frequently used in the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic languages; and signifies the celebration of the praises of God with a high voice.—*John Gill.*

Verse 2.—"*For his merciful kindness is great toward us.*" We cannot part from this psalm without remarking that even in the Old Testament we have more than one instance of a recognition on the part of those that were without the pale of the church that God's favour to Israel was a source of blessing to themselves. Such were probably to some extent the sentiments of Hiram and the Queen of Sheba, the contemporaries of Solomon; such the experience of Naaman; such the virtual acknowledgments of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede. They beheld "his merciful *kindness*" towards his servants of the house of Israel, and they praised him accordingly.—*John Francis Thrupp.*

Verse 2.—"*For his merciful kindness is great toward us.*" Albeit there be matter of praise unto God in himself, though we should not be partakers of any benefit from him, yet the Lord doth give his people cause to praise him for favours to them in their own particular cases.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 2.—"*For his merciful kindness is great.*" גָּבַר, *gabar*, is *strong:* it is not only *great* in *bulk* or *number;* but it is *powerful;* it prevails over sin, Satan, death, and hell.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2.—"*Merciful kindness . . . . and the truth of the* LORD." Here, and so in divers other psalms, God's mercy and truth are joined together; to show that all passages and proceedings, both in ordinances and in providences, whereby he cometh and communicateth himself to his people are not only mercy, though that is very sweet, but truth also. Their blessings come to them in the way of promise from God, as bound to them by the truth of his covenant. This is soul-satisfying indeed; this turns all that a man hath to cream, when every mercy is a present sent from heaven by virtue of a promise. Upon this account, God's mercy is ordinarily in the Psalms bounded by his truth; that none may either presume him more merciful than he hath declared himself in his word; nor despair of finding mercy *gratis*, according to the truth of his promise. Therefore though thy sins be great, believe the text, and know that God's mercy is greater than thy sins. The high heaven covereth as well tall mountains as small molehills, and mercy can cover all. The more desperate thy disease, the greater is the glory of thy physician, who hath perfectly cured thee.—*Abraham Wright.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Whole Psalm.—The universal kingdom. I. The same God. II. The same worship. III. The same reason for it.

Verse 2.—"*Merciful kindness.*" In God's kindness there is mercy, because, I. Our sin deserves the reverse of kindness. II. Our weakness requires great tenderness. III. Our fears can only be so removed.

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—I. In his attribute—he is always faithful. II. In his revelation—always infallible. III. In his action—always according to promise.

PSALM CXVIII.

AUTHOR AND SUBJECT.—*In the book Ezra, iii.* 10, 11, *we read that "when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid." Now the words mentioned in Ezra are the first and last sentences of this Psalm, and we therefore conclude that the people chanted the whole of this sublime song; and, moreover, that the use of this composition on such occasions was ordained by David, whom we conceive to be its author. The next step leads us to believe that he is its subject, at least in some degree; for it is clear that the writer is speaking concerning himself in the first place, though he may not have strictly confined himself to all the details of his own personal experience. That the psalmist had a prophetic view of our Lord Jesus is very manifest; the frequent quotations from this song in the New Testament prove this beyond all question; but at the same time it could not have been intended that every particular line and sentence should be read in reference to the Messiah, for this requires very great ingenuity, and ingenious interpretations are seldom true. Certain devout expositors have managed to twist the expression of the seventeenth verse, "I shall not die, but live," so as to make it applicable to our Lord,* who did actually die, *and whose glory it is that he died; but we cannot bring our minds to do such violence to the words of holy writ.*

The psalm seems to us to describe either David or some other man of God who was appointed by the divine choice to a high and honourable office in Israel. This elect champion found himself rejected by his friends and fellow-countrymen, and at the same time violently opposed by his enemies. In faith in God he battles for his appointed place, and in due time he obtains it in such a way as greatly to display the power and goodness of the Lord. He then goes up to the house of the Lord to offer sacrifice, and to express his gratitude for the divine interposition, all the people blessing him, and wishing him abundant prosperity. This heroic personage, whom we cannot help thinking to be David himself, broadly typified our Lord, but not in such a manner that in all the minutæ of his struggles and prayers we are to hunt for parallels. The suggestion of Alexander that the speaker is a typical individual representing the nation, is exceedingly well worthy of attention; but it is not inconsistent with the idea that a personal leader may be intended, since that which describes the leader will be in a great measure true of his followers. The experience of the Head is that of the members, and both may be spoken of in much the same terms. Alexander thinks that the deliverance celebrated cannot be identified with any one so exactly as with that from the Babylonian exile; but we judge it best to refer it to no one incident in particular, but to regard it as a national song, adapted alike for the rise of a chosen hero, and the building of a temple. Whether a nation is re-founded by a conquering prince, or a temple founded by the laying of its corner-stone in joyful state, the psalm is equally applicable.

DIVISION.—*We propose to divide this psalm thus, from verses* 1 *to* 4 *the faithful are called upon to magnify the everlasting mercy of the Lord; from* 5 *to* 18 *the psalmist gives forth a narrative of his experience, and an expression of his faith; in verses* 19 *to* 21 *he asks admittance into the house of the Lord, and begins the acknowledgment of the divine salvation. In verses* 22 *to* 27 *the priests and people recognize their ruler, magnify the Lord for him, declare him blessed, and bid him approach the altar with his sacrifice. In the two closing verses the grateful hero himself exalts God the ever-merciful.*

EXPOSITION.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: because his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

3 Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

1. "*O give thanks unto the* LORD." The grateful hero feels that he cannot himself alone sufficiently express his thankfulness, and therefore he calls in the aid of others. Grateful hearts are greedy of men's tongues, and would monopolize them all for God's glory. The whole nation was concerned in David's triumphant accession, and therefore it was right that they should unite in his adoring song of praise. The thanks were to be rendered unto Jehovah alone, and not to the patience or valour of the hero himself. It is always well to trace our mercies to him who bestows them, and if we cannot give him anything else, let us at any rate give him our thanks. We must not stop short at the second agent, but rise at once to the first cause, and render all our praises *unto the Lord* himself. Have we been of a forgetful or murmuring spirit? Let us hear the lively language of the text, and allow it to speak to our hearts: "Cease your complainings, cease from all self-glorification, and give thanks unto the Lord." "*For he is good.*" This is reason enough for giving him thanks: goodness is his essence and nature, and therefore he is always to be praised whether we are receiving anything from him or not. Those who only praise God because he *does* them good should rise to a higher note and give thanks to him because he *is* good. In the truest sense he alone is good, "There is none good but one, that is God"; therefore in all gratitude the Lord should have the royal portion. If others seem to be good, he *is* good. If others are good in a measure, he is good beyond measure. When others behave badly to us, it should only stir us up the more heartily to give thanks unto the Lord, because he is good: and when we ourselves are conscious that we are far from being good, we should only the more reverently bless him that "he is good." We must never tolerate an instant's unbelief as to the goodness of the Lord; whatever else may be questionable, this is absolutely certain, that Jehovah is good: his dispensations may vary, but his nature is always the same, and always good. It is not only that he was good, and will be good, but he *is* good; let his providence be what it may. Therefore let us even at this present moment, though the skies be dark with clouds, yet give thanks unto his name.

"*Because his mercy endureth for ever.*" Mercy is a great part of his goodness, and one which more concerns us than any other, for we are sinners and have need of his mercy. Angels may say that he is good, but they need not his mercy and cannot therefore take an equal delight in it; inanimate creation declares that *he is good*, but it cannot feel his *mercy*, for it has never transgressed; but man, deeply guilty and graciously forgiven, beholds mercy as the very focus and centre of the goodness of the Lord. The endurance of the divine mercy is a special subject for song: notwithstanding our sins, our trials, our fears, his mercy *endureth for ever*. The best of earthly joys pass away, and even the world itself grows old and hastens to decay, but there is no change in the mercy of God; he was faithful to our forefathers, he is merciful to us, and will be gracious to our children and our children's children. It is to be hoped that the philosophical interpreters who endeavor to clip the word "for ever" into a mere period of time will have the goodness to let this passage alone. However, whether they do or not, we shall believe in endless mercy—mercy to eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the grand incarnation of the mercy of God, calls upon us at every remembrance of him to give thanks unto the Lord, for "he is good."

2. "*Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*" God had made a covenant with their forefathers, a covenant of mercy and love, and to that covenant he was faithful evermore. Israel sinned in Egypt, provoked the Lord in the wilderness, went astray again and again under the judges, and

transgressed at all times: and yet the Lord continued to regard them as his people, to favour them with his oracles, and to forgive their sins. He speedily ceased from the chastisements which they so richly deserved, because he had a favour towards them. He put his rod away the moment they repented, because his heart was full of compassion. "His mercy endureth for ever" was Israel's national hymn, which, as a people, they had been called upon to sing upon many former occasions; and now their leader, who had at last gained the place for which Jehovah had destined him, calls upon the whole nation to join with him in extolling, in this particular instance of the divine goodness, the eternal mercy of the Lord. David's success was mercy to Israel, as well as mercy to himself. If Israel does not sing, who will? If Israel does not sing of mercy, who can? If Israel does not sing when the Son of David ascends the throne, the very stones will cry out.

3. "*Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*" The sons of Aaron were specially set apart to come nearest to God, and it was only because of his mercy that they were enabled to live in the presence of the thrice holy Jehovah, who is a consuming fire. Every time the morning and evening lamb was sacrificed, the priests saw the continual mercy of the Lord, and in all the holy vessels of the sanctuary, and all its services from hour to hour, they had renewed witness of the goodness of the Most High. When the high priest went in unto the holy place and came forth accepted, he might, above all men, sing of the eternal mercy. If this psalm refers to David, the priests had special reason for thankfulness on his coming to the throne, for Saul had made a great slaughter among them, and had at various times interfered with their sacred office. A man had now come to the throne who for their Master's sake would esteem them, give them their dues, and preserve them safe from all harm. Our Lord Jesus, having made all his people priests unto God, may well call upon them in that capacity to magnify the everlasting mercy of the Most High. Can any one of the royal priesthood be silent?

4. "*Let them now that fear the* LORD *say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*" If there were any throughout the world who did not belong to Israel after the flesh, but nevertheless had a holy fear and lowly reverence of God, the psalmist calls upon them to unite with him in his thanksgiving, and to do it especially on the occasion of his exaltation to the throne; and this is no more than they would cheerfully agree to do, since every good man in the world is benefited when a true servant of God is placed in a position of honour and influence. The prosperity of Israel through the reign of David was a blessing to all who feared Jehovah. A truly God-fearing man will have his eye much upon God's mercy, because he is deeply conscious of his need of it, and because that attribute excites in him a deep feeling of reverential awe. "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared."

In the three exhortations, to Israel, to the house of Aaron, and to them that fear the Lord, there is a repetition of the exhortation to *say*, "that his mercy endureth for ever." We are not only to believe, but to declare the goodness of God; truth is not to be hushed up, but proclaimed. God would have his people act as witnesses, and not stand silent in the day when his honour is impugned. Specially is it our joy to speak out to the honour and glory of God when we think upon the exaltation of his dear Son. We should shout "Hosannah," and sing loud "Hallelujahs" when we behold the stone which the builders rejected lifted into its proper place.

In each of the three exhortations notice carefully the word "*now*." There is no time like time present for telling out the praises of God. The present exaltation of the Son of David now demands from all who are the subjects of his kingdom continual songs of thanksgiving to him who hath set him on high in the midst of Zion. *Now* with us should mean always. When would it be right to cease from praising God, whose mercy never ceases?

The fourfold testimonies to the everlasting mercy of God which are now before us speak like four evangelists, each one declaring the very pith and marrow

of the gospel; and they stand like four angels at the four corners of the earth holding the winds in their hands, restraining the plagues of the latter days that the mercy and long-suffering of God may endure towards the sons of men. Here are four cords to bind the sacrifice to the four horns of the altar, and four trumpets with which to proclaim the year of jubilee to every quarter of the world. Let not the reader pass on to the consideration of the rest of the psalm until he has with all his might lifted up both heart and voice to praise the Lord, "for his mercy endureth for ever."

"Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for he is kind;
For his mercies shall endure
Ever faithful, ever sure."

5 I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place.
6 The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?
7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.
8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
9 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.
10 All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.
11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
12 They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation.
15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.
18 The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

5. "*I called upon the* LORD *in distress,*" or, "out of anguish I invoked Jah." Nothing was left him but prayer, his agony was too great for aught beside; but having the heart and the privilege to pray he possessed all things. Prayers which come out of distress generally come out of the heart, and therefore they go to the heart of God. It is sweet to recollect our prayers, and often profitable to tell others of them after they are heard. Prayer may be bitter in the offering, but it will be sweet in the answering. The man of God had called upon the Lord when he was not in distress, and therefore he found it natural and easy to call upon him when he was in distress. He worshipped, he praised, he

prayed: for all this is included in calling upon God, even when he was in a straitened condition. Some read the original "a narrow gorge"; and therefore it was the more joy to him when he could say "The Lord answered me, and set me in a large place." He passed out of the defile of distress into the well-watered plain of delight. He says, "Jah heard me in a wide place," for God is never shut up, or straitened. In God's case hearing means answering, hence the translators rightly put, "The Lord answered me," though the original word is "*heard.*" The answer was appropriate to the prayer, for he brought him out of his narrow and confined condition into a place of liberty where he could walk at large, free from obstruction and oppression. Many of us can join with the psalmist in the declarations of this verse; deep was our distress on account of sin, and we were shut up as in a prison under the law, but in answer to the prayer of faith we obtained the liberty of full justification wherewith Christ makes men free, and we are free indeed. It was the Lord who did it, and unto his name we ascribe all the glory; we had no merits, no strength, no wisdom, all we could do was to call upon him, and even that was his gift; but the mercy which is to eternity came to our rescue, we were brought out of bondage, and we were made to delight ourselves in the length and breadth of a boundless inheritance. What a large place is that in which the great God has placed us! All things are ours, all times are ours, all places are ours, for God himself is ours; we have earth to lodge in and heaven to dwell in,—what larger place can be imagined? We need all Israel, the whole house of Aaron, and all them that fear the Lord, to assist us in the expression of our gratitude; and when they have aided us to the utmost, and we ourselves have done our best, all will fall short of the praises that are due to our gracious Lord.

"*The* LORD *is on my side,*" or, he is "for me." Once his justice was against me, but now he is my reconciled God, and engaged on my behalf. The Psalmist naturally rejoiced in the divine help; all men turned against him, but God was his defender and advocate, accomplishing the divine purposes of his grace. The expression may also be translated "to me," that is to say, Jehovah belongs to me, and is mine. What infinite wealth is here! If we do not magnify the Lord we are of all men most brutish. "*I will not fear.*" He does not say that he should not suffer, but that he would not fear: the favour of God infinitely outweighed the hatred of men, therefore setting the one against the other he felt that he had no reason to be afraid. He was calm and confident, though surrounded with enemies, and so let all believers be, for thus they honour God. "*What can man do unto me?*" He can do nothing more than God permits; at the very uttermost he can only kill the body, but he hath no more that he can do. God having purposed to set his servant upon the throne, the whole race of mankind could do nothing to thwart the divine decree: the settled purpose of Jehovah's heart could not be turned aside, nor its accomplishment delayed, much less prevented, by the most rancorous hostility of the most powerful of men. Saul sought to slay David, but David outlived Saul, and sat upon his throne. Scribe and Pharisee, priest and Herodian, united in opposing the Christ of God, but he is exalted on high none the less because of their enmity. The mightiest man is a puny thing when he stands in opposition to God, yea, he shrinks into utter nothingness. It were a pity to be afraid of such a pitiful, miserable, despicable object as a man opposed to the almighty God. The psalmist here speaks like a champion throwing down the gauntlet to all comers, defying the universe in arms; a true Bayard, without fear and without reproach, he enjoys God's favour, and he defies every foe.

7. "*The* LORD *taketh my part with them that help me.*" Jehovah condescended to be in alliance with the good man and his comrades; his God was not content to look on, but he took part in the struggle. What a consolatory fact it is that the Lord takes our part, and that when he raises up friends for us he does not leave them to fight for us alone, but he himself as our chief defender deigns to come into the battle and wage war on our behalf. David mentioned those that helped him, he was not unmindful of his followers; there

is a long record of David's mighty men in the book of Chronicles, and this teaches us that we are not to disdain or think little of the generous friends who rally around us; but still our great dependence and our grand confidence must be fixed upon the Lord alone. Without him the strong helpers fail; indeed, apart from him in the sons of men there is no help; but when our gracious Jehovah is pleased to support and strengthen those who aid us, they become substantial helpers to us.

"*Therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.*" The words, "my desire," are added by the translators; the psalmist said, "I shall look upon my haters: I shall look upon them in the face, I shall make them cease from their contempt, I shall myself look down upon them instead of their looking down upon me. I shall see their defeat, I shall see the end of them." Our Lord Jesus does at this moment look down upon his adversaries, his enemies are his footstool; he shall look upon them at his second coming, and at the glance of his eyes they shall flee before him, not being able to endure that look with which he shall read them through and through.

8. "*It is better to trust in the* LORD *than to put confidence in man.*" It is better in all ways, for first of all it is wiser: God is infinitely more able to help, and more likely to help, than man, and therefore prudence suggests that we put our confidence in him above all others. It is also morally better to do so, for it is the duty of the creature to trust in the Creator. God has a claim upon his creatures' faith, he deserves to be trusted; and to place our reliance upon another rather than upon himself, is a direct insult to his faithfulness. It is better in the sense of safer, since we can never be sure of our ground if we rely upon mortal man, but we are always secure in the hands of our God. It is better in its effect upon ourselves: to trust in man tends to make us mean, crouching, dependent; but confidence in God elevates, produces a sacred quiet of spirit, and sanctifies the soul. It is, moreover, much better to trust in God, as far as the result is concerned; for in many cases the human object of our trust fails from want of ability, from want of generosity, from want of affection, or from want of memory; but the Lord, so far from failing, does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think. This verse is written out of the experience of many who have first of all found the broken reeds of the creature break under them, and have afterwards joyfully found the Lord to be a solid pillar sustaining all their weight.

9. "*It is better to trust in the* LORD *than to put confidence in princes.*" These should be the noblest of men, chivalrous in character, and true to the core. The royal word should be unquestionable. They are noblest in rank and mightiest in power, and yet as a rule princes are not one whit more reliable than the rest of mankind. A gilded vane turns with the wind as readily as a meaner weathercock. Princes are but men, and the best of men are poor creatures. In many troubles they cannot help us in the least degree; for instance, in sickness, bereavement, or death; neither can they assist us one jot in reference to our eternal state. In eternity a prince's smile goes for nothing; heaven and hell pay no homage to royal authority. The favour of princes is proverbially fickle, the testimonies of worldlings to this effect are abundant. All of us remember the words put by the world's great poet into the lips of the dying Wolsey; their power lies in their truth:—

> "O how wretched
> Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!
> There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
> That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
> More pangs and fears than wars or women have;
> And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
> Never to hope again."

Yet a prince's smile has a strange witchery to many hearts, few are proof against that tuft-hunting which is the index of a weak mind. Principle has been forgotten and character has been sacrificed to maintain position at court;

yea, the manliness which the meanest slave retains has been basely bartered for the stars and garters of a profligate monarch. He who puts his confidence in God, the great King, is thereby made mentally and spiritually stronger, and rises to the highest dignity of manhood; in fact, the more he trusts the more is he free, but the fawning sycophant of greatness is meaner than the dirt he treads upon. For this reason and a thousand others it is infinitely better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

10. "*All nations compassed me about.*" The hero of the psalm, while he had no earthly friend upon whom he could thoroughly rely, was surrounded by innumerable enemies, who heartily hated him. He was hemmed in by his adversaries, and scarce could find a loophole of escape from the bands which made a ring around him. As if by common consent all sorts of people set themselves against him, and yet he was more than a match for them all, because he was trusting in the name of the Lord. Therefore does he joyfully accept the battle, and grasp the victory, crying, "*but in the name of the* LORD *will I destroy them,*" or "cut them in pieces." They thought to destroy *him*, but he was sure of destroying *them;* they meant to blot out his name, but he expected to render not only his own name but the name of the Lord his God more illustrious in the hearts of men. It takes grand faith to be calm in the day of actual battle, and especially when that battle waxes hot; but our hero was as calm as if no fight was raging. Napoleon said that God was always on the side of the biggest battalions, but the psalmist-warrior found that the Lord of hosts was with the solitary champion, and that in his name the battalions were cut to pieces. There is a grand touch of the *ego* in the last sentence, but it is so overshadowed with the name of the Lord that there is none too much of it. He recognized his own individuality, and asserted it: he did not sit still supinely and leave the work to be done by God by some mysterious means; but he resolved with his own trusty sword to set about the enterprise, and so become in God's hand the instrument of his own deliverance. He did all in the name of the Lord, but he did not ignore his own responsibility, nor screen himself from personal conflict, for he cried, "*I* will destroy them." Observe that he does not speak of merely escaping from them like a bird out of the snare of the fowler, but he vows that he will carry the war into his enemies' ranks, and overthrow them so thoroughly that there should be no fear of their rising up a second time.

11. "*They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about.*" He had such a vivid recollection of his danger that his enemies seem to live again in his verses. We see their fierce array, and their cruel combination of forces. They made a double ring, they surrounded him in a circle of many ranks, they not only talked of doing so, but they actually shut him up and enclosed him as within a wall. His heart had vividly realized his position of peril at the time, and now he delights to call it again to mind in order that he may the more ardently adore the mercy which made him strong in the hour of conflict, so that he broke through a troop, yea, swept a host to destruction. "*But in the name of the* LORD *will I destroy them.*" I will subdue them, get them under my feet, and break their power in pieces. He is as certain about the destruction of his enemies as he was assured of their having compassed him about. They made the circle three and four times deep, but for all that he felt confident of victory. It is grand to hear a man speak in this fashion when it is not boasting, but the calm declaration of his heartfelt trust in God.

12. "*They compassed me about like bees.*" They seemed to be everywhere, like a swarm of bees, attacking him at every point; nimbly flying from place to place, stinging him meanwhile, and inflicting grievous pain. They threatened at first to baffle him: what weapon could he use against them? They were so numerous, so inveterate; so contemptible, yet so audacious; so insignificant and yet so capable of inflicting agony, that to the eye of reason there appeared no possibility of doing anything with them. Like the swarm of flies in Egypt, there was no standing against them; they threatened to sting a man to death

with their incessant malice, their base insinuations, their dastardly falsehoods. He was in an evil case, but even there faith availed. All-powerful faith adapts itself to all circumstances, it can cast out devils, and it can drive out bees. Surely, if it outlives the sting of death, it will not die from the sting of a bee. "*They are quenched as the fire of thorns.*" Their fierce attacks soon came to an end, the bees lost their stings and the buzz of the swarm subsided; like thorns which blaze with fierce crackling and abundant flame, but die out in a handful of ashes very speedily, so did the nations which surrounded our hero soon cease their clamour and come to an inglorious end. They were soon hot and soon cold, their attack was as short as it was sharp. He had no need to crush the bees, for like crackling thorns they died out of themselves. For a third time he adds, "*for in the name of the* LORD *will I destroy them,*" or "cut them down, as men cut down thorns with a scythe or reaping-hook.

What wonders have been wrought in the name of the Lord! It is the battle-cry of faith, before which its adversaries fly apace. "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" brings instant terror into the midst of the foe. The name of the Lord is the one weapon which never fails in the day of battle: he who knows how to use it may chase a thousand with his single arm. Alas! we too often go to work and to conflict in our own name, and the enemy knows it not, but scornfully enquires, "Who are ye?" Let us take care never to venture into the presence of the foe without first of all arming ourselves with this impenetrable mail. If we knew this name better, and trusted it more, our life would be more fruitful and sublime.

> "Jesus, the name high over all,
> In hell, or earth, or sky,
> Angels and men before it fall,
> And devils fear and fly."

13. "*Thou hast thrust sore at me,*" "Thrusting, thou hast thrust at me." It is a vigorous apostrophe, in which the enemy is described as concentrating all his thrusting power into the thrusts which he gave to the man of God. He thrust again and again with the keenest point, even as bees thrust their stings into their victim. The foe had exhibited intense exasperation, and fearful determination, nor had he been without a measure of success; wounds had been given and received, and these smarted much, and were exceeding sore. Now, this is true of many a tried child of God who has been wounded by Satan, by the world, by temptation, by affliction; the sword has entered into his bones, and left its mark. "*That I might fall.*" This was the object of the thrusting: to throw him down, to wound him in such a way that he would no longer be able to keep his place, to make him depart from his integrity, and lose his confidence in God. If our adversaries can do this they will have succeeded to their heart's content: if we fall into grievous sin they will be better pleased than even if they had sent the bullet of the assassin into our heart, for a moral death is worse than a physical one. If they can dishonour us, and God in us, their victory will be complete. "Better death than false of faith" is the motto of one of our noble houses, and it may well be ours. It is to compass our fall that they compass *us;* they fill us with their venom that they may fill us with their sin. "*But the Lord helped me*"; a blessed "but." This is the saving clause. Other helpers were unable to chase away the angry nations, much less to destroy all the noxious swarms; but when the Lord came to the rescue the hero's single arm was strong enough to vanquish all his adversaries. How sweetly can many of us repeat in the retrospect of our past tribulations this delightful sentence, "But the Lord helped *me.*" I was assailed by innumerable doubts and fears, but the Lord helped me; my natural unbelief was terribly inflamed by the insinuations of Satan, but the Lord helped me; multiplied trials were rendered more intense by the cruel assaults of men, and I knew not what to do, but the Lord helped me. Doubtless, when we land on the hither shore of Jordan, this will be one of our songs, "Flesh and heart were failing me, and

the adversaries of my soul surrounded me in the swellings of Jordan, but the Lord helped me, Glory be unto his name."

14. "*The* LORD *is my strength and song*," my strength while I was in the conflict, my song now that it is ended; my strength against the strong, and my song over their defeat. He is far from boasting of his own valour; he ascribes his victory to its real source, he has no song concerning his own exploits, but all his peans are unto *Jehovah Victor*, the Lord whose right hand and holy arm had given him the victory. "*And is become my salvation.*" The poet warrior knew that he was saved, and he not only ascribed that salvation unto God, but he declared God himself to be his salvation. It is an all-comprehending expression, signifying that from beginning to end, in the whole and in the details of it, he owed his deliverance entirely to the Lord. Thus can all the Lord's redeemed say, "Salvation is of the Lord." We cannot endure any doctrine which puts the crown upon the wrong head and defrauds the glorious King of his revenue of praise. Jehovah has done it all; yea, in Christ Jesus he *is* all, and therefore in our praises let him alone be extolled. It is a happy circumstance for us when we can praise God as alike our strength, song, and salvation: for God sometimes gives a secret strength to his people, and yet they question their own salvation, and cannot, therefore, sing of it. Many are, no doubt, truly saved, but at times they have so little strength, that they are ready to faint, and therefore they cannot sing: when strength is imparted and salvation is realised then the song is clear and full.

15. "*The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.*" They sympathised in the delight of their leader and they abode in their tents in peace, rejoicing that one had been raised up who, in the name of the Lord, would protect them from their adversaries. The families of believers are happy, and they should take pains to give their happiness a voice by their family devotion. The dwelling-place of saved men should be the temple of praise; it is but righteous that the righteous should praise the righteous God, who is their righteousness. The struggling hero knew that the voice of woe and lamentation was heard in the tents of his adversaries, for they had suffered severe defeat at his hands; but he was delighted by the remembrance that the nation for whom he had struggled would rejoice from one end of the land to the other at the deliverance which God had wrought by his means. That hero of heroes, the conquering Saviour, gives to all the families of his people abundant reasons for incessant song now that he has led captivity captive and ascended up on high. Let none of us be silent in our households: if we have salvation let us have joy, and if we have joy let us give it a tongue wherewith it may magnify the Lord. If we hearken carefully to the music which comes from Israel's tents, we shall catch a stanza to this effect, "*the right hand of the* LORD *doeth valiantly*": Jehovah has manifested his strength, given victory to his chosen champion, and overthrown all the armies of the foe. "The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name." When he comes to blows, woe to his mightiest opponent.

16. "*The right hand of the* LORD *is exalted*," lifted up to smite the foeman, or extolled and magnified in the eyes of his people. It is the Lord's *right* hand, the hand of his skill, the hand of his greatest power, the hand which is accustomed to defend his saints. When that is lifted up, it lifts up all who trust in him, and it casts down all who resist him. "*The right hand of the* LORD *doeth valiantly.*" The psalmist speaks in triplets, for he is praising the triune God, his heart is warm and he loves to dwell upon the note; he is not content with the praise he has rendered, he endeavours to utter it each time more fervently and more jubilantly than before. He had dwelt upon the sentence, "they compassed me about," for his peril from encircling armies was fully realised; and now he dwells upon the valour of Jehovah's right hand, for he has as vivid a sense of the presence and majesty of the Lord. How seldom is this the case: the Lord's mercy is forgotten and only the trial is remembered.

17. "*I shall not die, but live.*" His enemies hoped that he would die, and perhaps he himself feared he should perish at their hand: the news of his death may have been spread among his people, for the tongue of rumour is ever ready with ill news, the false intelligence would naturally cause great sorrow and despondency, but he proclaims himself as yet alive and as confident that he shall not fall by the hand of the destroyer. He is cheerfully assured that no arrow could carry death between the joints of his harness, and no weapon of any sort could end his career. His time had not yet come, he felt immortality beating within his bosom. Perhaps he had been sick, and brought to death's door, but he had a presentiment that the sickness was not unto death, but to the glory of God. At any rate, he knew that he should not so die as to give victory to the enemies of God; for the honour of God and the good of his people were both wrapped up in his continued success. Feeling that he would live he devoted himself to the noblest of purposes: he resolved to bear witness to the divine faithfulness, "*and declare the works of the* LORD." He determined to recount the works of Jah; and he does so in this psalm, wherein he dwells with love and admiration upon the splendour of Jehovah's prowess in the midst of the fight. While there is a testimony for God to be borne by us to any one, it is certain that we shall not be hurried from the land of the living. The Lord's prophets shall live on in the midst of famine, and war, and plague, and persecution, till they have uttered all the words of their prophecy; his priests shall stand at the altar unharmed till their last sacrifice has been presented before him. No bullet will find its billet in our hearts till we have finished our allotted period of activity.

"Plagues and deaths around me fly,
Till he please I cannot die:
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit."

18. "*The* LORD *hath chastened me sore.*" This is faith's version of the former passage, "Thou hast thrust sore at me;" for the attacks of the enemy are chastisements from the hand of God. The devil tormented Job for his own purposes, but in reality the sorrows of the patriarch were chastisements from the Lord. "Chastening, Jah hath chastened me," says our poet: as much as to say that the Lord had smitten him very severely, and made him sorrowfully to know the full weight of his rod. The Lord frequently appears to save his heaviest blows for his best-beloved ones; if any one affliction be more painful than another it falls to the lot of those whom he most distinguishes in his service. The gardener prunes his best roses with most care. Chastisement is sent to keep successful saints humble, to make them tender towards others, and to enable them to bear the high honours which their heavenly Friend puts upon them. "*But he hath not given me over unto death.*" This verse, like the thirteenth, concludes with a blessed "but," which constitutes a saving clause. The psalmist felt as if he had been beaten within an inch of his life, but yet death did not actually ensue. There is always a merciful limit to the scourging of the sons of God. Forty stripes save one were all that an Israelite might receive, and the Lord will never allow that one, that killing stroke, to fall upon his children. They are "chastened, but not killed"; their pains are for their instruction, not for their destruction. By these things the ungodly die, but gracious Hezekiah could say, "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." No, blessed be the name of God, he may chastise us, but he will not condemn us; we must feel the smarting rod, but we shall not feel the killing sword. He does not give us over unto death at any time, and we may be quite sure that he has not done so while he condescends to chasten us, for if he intended our final rejection he would not take the pains to place us under his fatherly discipline. It may seem hard to be under the afflicting rod, but it would be a far more dreadful thing if the Lord were to say, "He is given unto idols, let him alone." Even from our griefs we may distil consolation, and gather sweet flowers from the garden in which the Lord has planted salutary

rue and wormwood. It is a cheering fact that if we endure chastening God dealeth with us as with sons, and we may well be satisfied with the common lot of his beloved family.

The hero, restored to health, and rescued from the dangers of battle, now lifts up his own song unto the Lord, and asks all Israel, led on by the goodly fellowship of the priests, to assist him in chanting a joyful Te Deum.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD:

20 This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

19. "*Open to me the gates of righteousness.*" The grateful champion having reached the entrance of the temple, asks for admission in set form, as if he felt that he could only approach the hallowed shrine by divine permission, and wished only to enter in the appointed manner. The temple of God was meant for the righteous to enter and offer the sacrifices of righteousness, hence the gates are called the gates of righteousness. Righteous deeds were done within its walls, and righteous teachings sounded forth from its courts. The phrase "the gate" is sometimes used to signify power or empire; as, for instance, "the Sublime Porte" signifies the seat of empire of Turkey; the entrance to the temple was the true Sublime Porte, and what is better, it was the *porta justitiæ*, the gate of righteousness, the palace of the great King, who is in all things just. "*I will go into them, and I will praise the* LORD." Only let the gate be opened, and the willing worshipper will enter; and he will enter in the right spirit, and for the best of purposes, that he may render homage unto the Most High. Alas, there are multitudes who do not care whether the gates of God's house are opened or not; and although they know that they are opened wide they never care to enter, neither does the thought of praising God so much as cross their minds. The time will come for them when they shall find the gates of heaven shut against them, for those gates are peculiarly the gates of righteousness through which there shall by no means enter anything that defileth. Our champion might have praised the Lord in secret, and doubtless he did so; but he was not content without going up to the assembly, there to register his thanksgivings. Those who neglect public worship generally neglect all worship; those who praise God within their own gates are among the readiest to praise him within his temple gates. Our hero had also in all probability been sore sick, and therefore like Hezekiah he says, "The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of my life in the house of the Lord." Public praise for public mercies is every way most appropriate, most acceptable to God, and most profitable to others.

20. "*This gate of the* LORD, *into which the righteous shall enter.*" The psalmist loves the house of God so well that he admires the very gate thereof, and pauses beneath its arch to express his affection for it. He loved it because it was the gate of the Lord, he loved it because it was the gate of righteousness, because so many godly people had already entered it, and because in all future ages such persons will continue to pass through its portals. If the gate of the Lord's house on earth is so pleasant to us, how greatly shall we rejoice when we pass that gate of pearl, to which none but the righteous shall ever approach, but through which all the just shall in due time enter to eternal felicity. The Lord Jesus has passed that way, and not only set the gate wide open, but secured an entrance for all those who are made righteous in his righteousness: all the righteous must and shall enter there, whoever may oppose them. Under another aspect our Lord is himself that gate, and through him,

as the new and living Way, all the righteous delight to approach unto the Lord. Whenever we draw near to praise the Lord we must come by this gate; acceptable praise never climbs over the wall, or enters by any other way, but comes to God in Christ Jesus; as it is written, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Blessed, for ever blessed, be this wondrous gate of the person of our Lord.

21. Having entered, the champion exclaims, "*I will praise thee*," not "I will praise the Lord," for now he vividly realizes the divine presence, and addresses himself directly to Jehovah, whom his faith sensibly discerns. How well it is in all our songs of praise to let the heart have direct and distinct communion with God himself! The psalmist's song was personal praise too:—"*I* will praise thee"; resolute praise, for he firmly resolved to offer it; spontaneous praise, for he voluntarily and cheerfully rendered it, and continuous praise, for he did not intend soon to have done with it. It was a life-long vow to which there would never come a close, "I will praise thee." "*For thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.*" He praises God by mentioning his favours, weaving his song out of the divine goodness which he had experienced. In these words he gives the reason for his praise,—his answered prayer, and the deliverance which he had received in consequence. How fondly he dwells upon the personal interposition of God! "*Thou* hast heard me." How heartily he ascribes the whole of his victory over his enemies to God; nay, he sees God himself to be the whole of it: "*Thou* art become my salvation." It is well to go directly to God himself, and not to stay even in his mercy, or in the acts of his grace. Answered prayers bring God very near to us; realised salvation enables us to realise the immediate presence of God. Considering the extreme distress through which the worshipper had passed, it is not at all wonderful that he should feel his heart full of gratitude at the great salvation which God had wrought for him, and should at his first entrance into the temple lift up his voice in thankful praise for personal favours so great, so needful, so perfect.

22 The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

23 This is the LORD'S doing; it *is* marvellous in our eyes.

24 This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26 Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

27 God *is* the LORD, which hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

This passage would appear to be a mixture of the expressions of the people and of the hero himself.

22. "*The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*" Here the people magnify God for bringing his chosen servant into the honourable office, which had been allotted to him by divine decree. A wise king and valiant leader is a stone by which the national fabric is built up. David had been rejected by those in authority, but God had placed him in a position of the highest honour and the greatest usefulness, making him the chief corner-stone of the state. In the case of many others whose early life has been spent in conflict, the Lord has been pleased to accomplish his divine purposes in like manner; but to none is this text so applicable as to the Lord Jesus himself: he is the living stone, the tried stone, elect, precious, which God himself appointed from of old. The Jewish builders, scribe, priest, Pharisee, and Herodian, rejected him with disdain.

They could see no excellence in him that they should build upon him; he could not be made to fit in with their ideal of a national church, he was a stone of another quarry from themselves, and not after their mind nor according to their taste: therefore they cast him away and poured contempt upon him, even as Peter said, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders"; they reckoned him to be as nothing, though he is Lord of all. In raising him from the dead the Lord God exalted him to be the head of his church, the very pinnacle of her glory and beauty. Since then he has become the confidence of the Gentiles, even of them that are afar off upon the sea, and thus he has joined the two walls of Jew and Gentile into one stately temple, and is seen to be the "sin ling corner-stone," making both one. This is a delightful subject for contemplation.

Jesus in all things hath the pre-eminence, he is the principal stone of the whole house of God. We are accustomed to lay some one stone of a public building with solemn ceremony, and to deposit in it any precious things which may have been selected as a memorial of the occasion: henceforth that corner-stone is looked upon as peculiarly honourable, and joyful memories are associated with it. All this is in a very emphatic sense true of our blessed Lord, "The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." God himself laid him where he is, and hid within him all the precious things of the eternal covenant; and there he shall for ever remain, the foundation of all our hopes, the glory of all our joys, the united bond of all our fellowship. He is "the head over all things to the church," and by him the church is fitly framed together, and groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. Still do the builders refuse him: even to this day the professional teachers of the gospel are far too apt to fly to any and every new philosophy sooner than maintain the simple gospel, which is the essence of Christ: nevertheless, he holds his true position amongst his people, and the foolish builders shall see to their utter confusion that his truth shall be exalted over all. Those who reject the chosen stone will stumble against him to their own hurt, and ere long will come his second advent, when he will fall upon them from the heights of heaven, and grind them to powder.

23. "*This is the* LORD'S *doing.*" The exalted position of Christ in his church is not the work of man, and does not depend for its continuation upon any builders or ministers; God himself has wrought the exaltation of our Lord Jesus. Considering the opposition which comes from the wisdom, the power, and the authority of this world, it is manifest that if the kingdom of Christ be indeed set up and maintained in the world it must be by supernatural power. Indeed, it is so even in the smallest detail. Every grain of true faith in this world is a divine creation, and every hour in which the true church subsists is a prolonged miracle. It is not the goodness of human nature, nor the force of reasoning, which exalts Christ, and builds up the church, but a power from above. This staggers the adversary, for he cannot understand what it is which baffles him: of the Holy Ghost he knows nothing. "*It is marvellous in our eyes.*" We actually see it; it is not in our thoughts and hopes and prayers alone, but the astonishing work is actually before our eyes. Jesus reigns, his power is felt, and we perceive that it is so. Faith sees our great Master, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; she sees and marvels. It never ceases to astonish us, as we see, even here below, God by means of weakness defeating power, by the simplicity of his word baffling the craft of men, and by the invisible influence of his Spirit exalting his Son in human hearts in the teeth of open and determined opposition. It is indeed "marvellous in our eyes," as all God's works must be if men care to study them. In the Hebrew the passage reads, "*It is wonderfully done*": not only is the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth itself wonderful, but the way in which it is brought about is marvellous: it is wonderfully done. The more we study the history of Christ and his church the more fully shall we agree with this declaration.

24. "*This is the day which the* LORD *hath made.*" A new era has commenced. The day of David's enthronement was the beginning of better times for Israel; and in a far higher sense the day of our Lord's resurrection is a new day of God's own making, for it is the dawn of a blessed dispensation. No doubt the Israelitish nation celebrated the victory of its champion with a day of feasting, music and song; and surely it is but meet that we should reverently keep the feast of the triumph of the Son of David. We observe the Lord's day as henceforth our true Sabbath, a day made and ordained of God, for the perpetual remembrance of the achievements of our Redeemer. Whenever the soft Sabbath light of the first day of the week breaks upon the earth, let us sing,

> "This is the day the Lord hath made,
> He calls the hours his own;
> Let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,
> And praise surround the throne."

We by no means wish to confine the reference of the passage to the Sabbath, for the whole gospel day is the day of God's making, and its blessings come to us through our Lord's being placed as the head of the corner. "*We will rejoice and be glad in it.*" What else can we do? Having obtained so great a deliverance through our illustrious leader, and having seen the eternal mercy of God so brilliantly displayed, it would ill become us to mourn and murmur. Rather will we exhibit a double joy, rejoice in heart and be glad in face, rejoice in secret and be glad in public, for we have more than a double reason for being glad in the Lord. We ought to be specially joyous on the Sabbath: it is the queen of days, and its hours should be clad in royal apparel of delight. George Herbert says of it:—

> "Thou art a day of mirth,
> And where the week-days trail on ground,
> Thy flight is higher as thy birth."

Entering into the midst of the church of God, and beholding the Lord Jesus as all in all in the assemblies of his people, we are bound to overflow with joy. Is it not written, "then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord"? When the King makes the house of prayer to be a banqueting house, and we have grace to enjoy fellowship with him, both in his sufferings and in his triumphs, we feel an intense delight, and we are glad to express it with the rest of his people.

25. "*Save now, I beseech thee, O* LORD." Hosanna! God save our king! Let David reign! Or as we who live in these latter days interpret it,—Let the Son of David live for ever, let his saving help go forth throughout all nations. This was the peculiar shout of the feast of tabernacles; and so long as we dwell here below in these tabernacles of clay we cannot do better than use the same cry. Perpetually let us pray that our glorious King may work salvation in the midst of the earth. We plead also for ourselves that the Lord would save us, deliver us, and continue to sanctify us. This we ask with great earnestness, beseeching it of Jehovah. Prayer should always be an entreating and beseeching. "*O* LORD, *I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*" Let the church be built up: through the salvation of sinners may the number of the saints be increased; through the preservation of saints may the church be strengthened, continued, beautified, perfected. Our Lord Jesus himself pleads for the salvation and the prosperity of his chosen; as our Intercessor before the throne he asks that the heavenly Father would save and keep those who were of old committed to his charge, and cause them to be one through the indwelling Spirit. Salvation had been given, and therefore it is asked for. Strange though it may seem, he who cries for salvation is already in a measure saved. None can so truly cry, "Save, I beseech thee," as those who have already participated in salvation; and the most prosperous church is that which most imploringly seeks prosperity. It may seem strange that, returning from victory, flushed with

triumph, the hero should still ask for salvation; but so it is, and it could not be otherwise. When all our Saviour's work and warfare were ended, his intercession became even more prominently a feature of his life; after he had conquered all his foes he made intercession for the transgressors. What is true of him is true of his church also, for whenever she obtains the largest measure of spiritual blessing she is then most inclined to plead for more. She never pants so eagerly for prosperity as when she sees the Lord's doings in her midst, and marvels at them. Then, encouraged by the gracious visitation, she sets apart her solemn days of prayer, and cries with passionate desire, "Save now," and "Send now prosperity." She would fain take the tide at the flood, and make the most of the day of which the Lord has already made so much.

26. "*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the* LORD." The champion had done everything "in the name of the Lord": in that name he had routed all his adversaries, and had risen to the throne, and in that name he had now entered the temple to pay his vows. We know who it is that cometh in the name of the Lord beyond all others. In the psalmist's days he was The Coming One, and he is still The Coming One, though he hath already come. We are ready with our hosannas both for his first and second advent; our inmost souls thankfully adore and bless him and invoke upon his head unspeakable joys. "Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised." For his sake everybody is blessed to us who comes in the name of the Lord, we welcome all such to our hearts and our homes; but chiefly, and beyond all others, we welcome *himself* when he deigns to enter in and sup with us and we with him. O sacred bliss, fit antepast of heaven! Perhaps this sentence is intended to be the benediction of the priests upon the valiant servant of the Lord, and if so, it is appropriately added, "*We have blessed you out of the house of the* LORD." The priests whose business it was to bless the people, in a sevenfold degree blessed the people's deliverer, the one chosen out of the people whom the Lord had exalted. All those whose high privilege it is to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, because they are made priests unto God in Christ Jesus, can truly say that they bless the Christ who has made them what they are, and placed them where they are. Whenever we feel ourselves at home with God, and feel the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba Father," the first thought of our hearts should be to bless the elder Brother, through whom the privilege of sonship has descended to such unworthy ones. In looking back upon our past lives we can remember many delightful occasions in which with joy unutterable we have in the fulness of our heart blessed our Saviour and our King; and all these memorable seasons are so many foretastes and pledges of the time when in the house of our great Father above we shall for ever sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," and with rapture bless the Redeemer's name.

27. "*God is the* LORD, *which hath shewed us light*," or "God is Jehovah," the only living and true God. There is none other God but he. The words may also be rendered, "Mighty is Jehovah." Only the power of God could have brought us such light and joy as spring from the work of our Champion and King. We have received light, by which we have known the rejected stone to be the head of the corner, and this light has led us to enlist beneath the banner of the once despised Nazarene, who is now the Prince of the kings of the earth. With the light of knowledge has come the light of joy; for we are delivered from the powers of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Our knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ came not by the light of nature, nor by reason, nor did it arise from the sparks which we ourselves had kindled, nor did we receive it of men; but the mighty God alone hath showed it to us. He made a day on purpose that he might shine upon us like the sun, and he made our faces to shine in the light of that day, according to the declaration of the twenty-fourth verse. Therefore, unto him be all the honour of our enlightenment. Let us do our best to magnify the great Father of lights from whom our present blessedness has descended.

"*Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*" Some think that by this we are taught that the king offered so many sacrifices that the whole area of the court was filled, and the sacrifices were bound even up to the altar; but we are inclined to keep to our own version, and to believe that sometimes restive bullocks were bound to the altar before they were slain, in which case Mant's verse is correct:—

> "He, Jehovah, is our Lord:
> He, our God, on us hath shined:
> Bind the sacrifice with cord,
> To the horned altar bind."

The word rendered "cords" carries with it the idea of wreaths and boughs, so that it was not a cord of hard, rough rope, but a decorated band; even as in our case, though we are bound to the altar of God, it is with the cords of love and the bands of a man, and not by a compulsion which destroys the freedom of the will. The sacrifice which we would present in honour of the victories of our Lord Jesus Christ is the living sacrifice of our spirit, soul, and body. We bring ourselves to his altar, and desire to offer him all that we have and are. There remains a tendency in our nature to start aside from this; it is not fond of the sacrificial knife. In the warmth of our love we come willingly to the altar, but we need constraining power to keep us there in the entirety of our being throughout the whole of life. Happily there is a cord which, twisted around the atonement, or, better still, around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our only Altar, can hold us, and does hold us: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died; and that he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." We are bound to the doctrine of atonement; we are bound to Christ himself, who is both altar and sacrifice; we desire to be more bound to him than ever, our soul finds her liberty in being tethered fast to the altar of the Lord. The American Board of Missions has for its seal an ox, with an altar on one side and a plough on the other, and the motto "Ready for either,"—ready to live and labour, or ready to suffer and die. We would gladly spend ourselves for the Lord actively, or be spent by him passively, whichever may be his will; but since we know the rebellion of our corrupt nature we earnestly pray that we may be kept in this consecrated mind, and that we may never, under discouragements, or through the temptations of the world, be permitted to leave the altar, to which it is our intense desire to be for ever fastened. Such consecration as this, and such desires for its perpetuity, well beseem that day of gladness which the Lord hath made so bright by the glorious triumph of his Son, our covenant head, our well-beloved.

28 Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee: *thou art* my God, I will exalt thee.

29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Now comes the closing song of the champion, and of each one of his admirers. 28. "*Thou art my God, and I will praise thee,*" my mighty God who hath done this mighty and marvellous thing. Thou shalt be mine, and all the praise my soul is capable of shall be poured forth at thy feet. "*Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.*" Thou hast exalted me, and as far as my praises can do it, I will exalt thy name. Jesus is magnified, and he magnifies the Father according to his prayer, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." God hath given us grace and promised us glory, and we are constrained to ascribe all grace to him, and all the glory of it also. The repetition indicates a double determination, and sets forth the firmness of the resolution, the heartiness of the affection, the intensity of the gratitude. Our Lord Jesus himself saith, "I will praise thee"; and well may each one of us, humbly

and with confidence in divine grace, add, on his own account, the same declaration, "*I* will praise thee." However others may blaspheme thee, I will exalt thee; however dull and cold I may sometimes feel myself, yet will I rouse up my nature, and determine that as long as I have any being that being shall be spent to thy praise. For ever thou art my God, and for ever I will give thee thanks.

29. "*O give thanks unto the* LORD; *for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*" The psalm concludes as it began, making a complete circle of joyful adoration. We can well suppose that the notes at the close of the loud hallelujah were more swift, more sweet, more loud than at the beginning. To the sound of trumpet and harp, Israel, the house of Aaron, and all that feared the Lord, forgetting their distinctions, joined in one common hymn, testifying again to their deep gratitude to the Lord's goodness, and to the mercy which is unto eternity. What better close could there be to this right royal song? The psalmist would have risen to something higher, so as to end with a climax, but nothing loftier remained. He had reached the height of his grandest argument, and there he paused. The music ceased, the song was suspended, the great *hallel* was all chanted, and the people went every one to his own home, quietly and happily musing upon the goodness of the Lord, whose mercy fills eternity.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Whole Psalm.—This is the last of those psalms which form the great *Hallel*, which the Jews sang at the end of the passover.—*Adam Clarke.*

Whole Psalm.—The whole psalm has a peculiar formation. It resembles the *Mashal* psalms, for each verse has of itself its completed sense, its own scent and hue; one thought is joined to another as branch to branch and flower to flower.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Whole Psalm.—Nothing can surpass the force and majesty, as well as the richly varied beauty, of this psalm. Its general burden is quite manifest. It is the prophetic expression, by the Spirit of Christ, of that exultant strain of anticipative triumph, wherein the virgin daughter of Zion will laugh to scorn, in the immediate prospect of her Deliverer's advent, the congregated armies of the Man of Sin (verses 10—13).—*Arthur Pridham.*

Whole Psalm.—The two psalms, 117th and 118th, are placed together because, though each is a distinct portion in itself, the 117th is an exordium to that which follows it, an address and an invitation to the Gentile and heathen world to acknowledge and praise Jehovah.

We are now arrived at the concluding portion of the hymn, which Christ and his disciples sung preparatory to their going forth to the Mount of Olives. Nothing could be more appropriate or better fitted to comfort and encourage, at that awful period, than a prophecy which, overleaping the suffering to be endured, showed forth the glory that was afterwards to follow, and a song of triumph, then only recited, but in due time to be literally acted, when the cross was to be succeeded by a crown. This psalm is not only frequently quoted in the New Testament, but it was also partially applied at one period of our Saviour's sojourn on earth, and thus we are afforded decisive testimony to the purpose for which it is originally and prophetically destined. It was partially used at the time when Messiah, in the days of his humiliation, was received with triumph and acclamation into Jerusalem; and we may conclude it will be fully enacted, when our glorified and triumphant Lord, coming with ten thousand of his saints, will again stand upon the earth and receive the promised salutation, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of Jehovah." This dramatic

representation of Messiah coming in glory, to take his great power and reign among us, is apportioned to the chief character, "the King of kings and Lord of lords," to his saints following him in procession, and to priests and Levites, representing the Jewish nation.

The Conqueror and his attendants sing the 117th Psalm, an introductory hymn, inviting all, Jews and Gentiles, to share in the merciful kindness of God, and to sing his praises. It is a gathering together of all the Lord's people, to be witnesses and partakers of his glory. The first, second, and third verses of the 118th Psalm are sung by single voices. As the procession moves along, the theme of rejoicing is announced. The first voice repeats, "*O give thanks unto the* LORD; *for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.*" Another single voice calls on Israel to acknowledge this great truth; and a third invites the house of Aaron, the priesthood, to acknowledge their share in Jehovah's love. The fourth verse is a chorus; the whole procession, the living, and the dead who are raised to meet Christ (1 Thess. iv. 16), shout aloud the burden of the song, verse 1. Arrived at the temple gate, or rather, the gate of Jerusalem, the Conqueror alone sings, verses 5, 6, 7. He begins by recounting the circumstances of his distress. Next, he tells of his refuge: I betook me to God, I told him my sorrows, and he heard me. The procession, in chorus, sings verses 8 and 9, taking up the substance of Messiah's chaunt, and fully echoing the sentiment, "*It is better to trust in the* LORD *than to put confidence in princes.*" The Conqueror alone again sings verses 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. He enlarges on the magnitude of his dangers, and the hopelessness of his situation. It was not a common difficulty, or a single enemy, whole nations compassed him about. The procession in chorus, verses 15, 16, attributes their Lord's great deliverance to his righteous person, and to his righteous cause. Justice and equity and truth, all demanded that Messiah should not be trodden down. "Was it not thine arm, O Jehovah, which has gotten thee the victory?" Messiah now takes up the language of a conqueror, verses 17, 18, 19. My sufferings were sore, but they were only for a season. I laid down my life, and I now take it up again: and then, with a loud voice, as when he roused Lazarus out of the grave, he cries to those within the walls, "*Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the* LORD." The priests and Levites within instantly obey his command, and while they throw open the gates, they sing, "*This is the gate of the* LORD, *into which the righteous shall enter.*" As he enters, the Conqueror alone repeats verse 21. His sorrows are ended, his victory is complete. The objects for which he lived and died, and for which his prayers were offered, are now fulfilled, and thus, in a few short words, he expresses his joy and gratitude to God. The priests and Levites sing in chorus verses 22, 23, 24. Depositaries and expounders of the prophecies as they had long been, they now, for the first time, quote and apply one, Isai. xxviii. 16, which held a conspicuous place, but never before was intelligible to Jewish ears. "The man of sorrows," the stone which the builders refused, is become the headstone of the corner. The Conqueror is now within the gates, and proceeds to accomplish his good purpose, Luke i. 68. "*Hosannah, save thy people, O* LORD, *and send them now prosperity,*" verse 25. The priests and Levites are led by the Spirit to use the words foretold by our Lord, Matt. xxiii. 39. Now at length the veil is removed, and his people say, "*Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the* LORD," verse 26. The Conqueror and his train (verse 27) now praise God, who has given light and deliverance and salvation, and they offer to him the sacrifice of thanksgiving for all that they enjoy. The Conqueror alone (verse 28) next makes a solemn acknowledgment of gratitude and praise to Jehovah, and then, all being within the gates, the united body, triumphant procession, priests and Levites, end, as they commenced, "*O give thanks unto the* LORD; *for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*"—*R. H. Ryland, in "The Psalms restored to Messiah,"* 1853.

Whole Psalm.—It was Luther's favourite psalm, his beauteous *Confitemini*, which "had helped him out of what neither emperor nor king, nor any other

man on earth, could have helped him." With the exposition of this his noblest jewel, his defence and his treasure, he occupied himself in the solitude of his Patmos (Coburg).—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Whole Psalm.—This is my psalm, my chosen psalm. I love them all; I love all holy Scripture, which is my consolation and my life. But this psalm is nearest my heart, and I have a peculiar right to call it mine. It has saved me from many a pressing danger, from which nor emperor, nor kings, nor sages, nor saints, could have saved me. It is my friend; dearer to me than all the honours and power of the earth. . . . But it may be objected, that this psalm is common to all; no one has a right to call it his own. Yes; but Christ is also common to all, and yet Christ is mine. I am not jealous of my property; I would divide it with the whole world. . . . . And would to God that all men would claim the psalm as especially theirs! It would be the most touching quarrel, the most agreeable to God—a quarrel of union and perfect charity.—*Luther. From his Dedication of his Translation of Psalm CXVIII. to the Abbot Frederick of Nuremberg.*

Verse 1.—"*For he is good.*" The praise of God could not be expressed in fewer words than these, "*For he is good.*" I see not what can be more solemn than this brevity, since goodness is so peculiarly the quality of God, that the Son of God himself when addressed by some one as "Good Master," by one, namely, who beholding his flesh, and comprehending not the fulness of his divine nature, considered him as man only, replied, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." And what is this but to say, If thou wishest to call me good, recognize me as God?—*Augustine.*

Verse 1.—"*His mercy endureth for ever.*" What the close of Ps. cxvii. says of God's truth, viz., that it endureth for ever, the beginning of Ps. cxviii. says of its sister, his mercy or loving-kindness.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verses 1—4.—As the salvation of the elect is one, and the love of God to them one, so should their song be one, as here four several times it is said, "*His mercy endureth for ever.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verses 1—4.—Because we hear the sentence so frequently repeated here, that "*the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever,*" we are not to think that the Holy Spirit has employed empty tautology, but our great necessity demands it: for in temptations and dangers the flesh begins to doubt of the mercy of God; therefore nothing should be so frequently impressed on the mind as this, that the mercy of God does not fail, that the Eternal Father wearies not in remitting our sins.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Verse 2.—"*Let Israel now say.*" Albeit all the elect have interest in God's praise for mercies purchased by Christ unto them, yet the elect of Israel have the first room in the song; for Christ is first promised to them, and came of them according to the flesh, and will be most marvellous about them.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 2.—"*Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*" Let such who have had an experience of it, acknowledge and declare it to others; not only believe it with their hearts, and privately give thanks for it, but with the mouth make confession of it to the glory of divine grace.—*John Gill.*

Verses 2, 3, 4.—"*Now.*" Beware of delaying. Delays be dangerous, our hearts will cool, and our affections will fall down. It is good then to be doing while it is called *to-day*, while it is called *now*. *Now*, *now*, *now*, saith David; there be three nows, and all to teach us that for aught we know, it is *now* or never, to-day or not at all; we must praise God while the heart is hot, else our iron will cool. Satan hath little hope to prevail unless he can persuade us to omit our duties when the clock strikes, and therefore his skill is to urge us to put it off till another time as fitter or better. Do it anon, next hour, next day, next week (saith he); and why not next year? Hereafter (saith he) it will be as well as now. This he saith indeed, but his meaning (by hereafter)

is never: and he that is not fit to-day, hath no promise but he shall be more unapt to-morrow. We have neither God nor our own hearts at command; and when we have lost the opportunity, God to correct us perhaps will not give us affections. The cock within shall not crow to awaken us, the sun shall not shine, and then we are in danger to give over quite; and if we come once to a total omission of one duty, why not of another, and of another, and so of all? and then farewell to us.—*Richard Capel* (1586—1656) *in* "*Tentations, their Nature, Danger, Cure.*"

Verse 4.—"*Them that fear the* LORD." Who were neither of "the house of Aaron," that is, of the priests or Levites; nor of "the house of Israel," that is, native Jews; yet might be of the Jewish religion, and "*fear the* LORD." These were called *proselytes*, and are here invited to praise the Lord.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4.—"*God's mercy endureth for ever.*" That is, his covenant mercy, that precious church privilege: this is perpetual to his people, and should perpetually remain as a memorial in our hearts. And therefore it is that this is the foot or burthen of these first four verses. Neither is there any idle repetition, but a notable expression of the saints' insatiableness of praising God for his never failing mercy. These heavenly birds having got a note, sing it over and over. In the last psalm there are but six verses, yet twelve Hallelujahs.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 5.—Perhaps verse 5, which says, "*I called upon the* LORD *in distress*" (literally, out of the narrow gorge), "*and the* LORD *answered me on the open plain*"—which describes the deliverance of Israel from their captivity,—may have been sung as they defiled from a narrow ravine into the plain; and when they arrived at the gate of the temple, then they broke forth in full chorus into the words, "Open to me the gates of righteousness" (ver. 19).—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5.—It is said, "*I called upon the* LORD." Thou must learn to call, and not to sit there by thyself, and lie on the bench, hang and shake thy head, and bite and devour thyself with thy thoughts; but come on, thou indolent knave, down upon thy knees, up with thy hands and eyes to heaven, take a psalm or a prayer, and set forth thy distress with tears before God.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 5.—"*The* LORD *answered me, and set me in a large place.*" It may be rendered, *The* LORD *answered me largely;* as he did Solomon, when he gave him more than he asked for; and as he does his people, when he gives them a sufficiency and an abundance of his grace; not only above their deserts, but above their thoughts and expectations. See Eph. iii. 20.—*John Gill.*

Verse 6.—"*The* LORD *is on my side.*" The reason which the psalmist gives here for his trusting, or for his not fearing, is the great fact, that the Lord is on his side; and the prominent idea which this brings before us is *Alliance; the making common cause,* which the great God undoubtedly does, with imperfect, yet with earnest, trusting man.

We know very well the great anxiety shown by men, in all their worldly conflicts, to secure the aid of a powerful ally; in their lawsuits, to retain the services of a powerful advocate; or, in their attempts at worldly advancement, to win the friendship and interest of those who can further the aims they have in view. When Herod was highly displeased with the armies of Tyre and Sidon, they did not venture to approach him until they had made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend. If such and such a person be on their side, men think that all must go well. Who so well off as he who is able to say, "*The* LORD *is on my side*"?—*Philip Bennet Power, in* "*The I Will's of the Psalms,*" 1861.

Verse 6.—God is with those he calls and employs in public service. Joshua

was exhorted to be strong and of good courage, "For the Lord thy God is with thee" (Josh. i. 9). So also was Jeremiah, "Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee" (Jer. i. 8). God's presence should put life into us. When inferior natures are backed with a superior, they are full of courage: when the master is by, the dog will venture upon creatures greater than himself and fear not; at another time he will not do it when his master is absent. When God is with us, who is the supreme, it should make us fearless. It did David; "*The* LORD *is on my side; I will not fear what man can do unto me.*" Let him do his worst, frown, threat, plot, arm, strike; the Lord is on my side, he hath a special care for me, he is a shield unto me, I will not fear, but hope; as it is in the next verse, "I shall see my desire on them that hate me," I shall see them changed or ruined. Our help is in the name of the Lord, but our fears are in the name of man.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 6.—"*I will not fear.*" David, (or God's people, if you will,) being taught by experience, exults in great confidence, but does not say, the Lord is my helper, and I shall suffer no more, knowing that while he is a pilgrim here below he will have much to suffer from his daily enemies; but he says, "*The* LORD *is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.*"—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 6.—"*Man*" does not here mean *a man*, but *mankind*, or man as opposed to God.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 8.—It may perhaps be considered beneath the dignity and solemnity of our subject to remark, that this 8th verse of this psalm is the middle verse of the Bible. There are, I believe, 31,174 verses in all, and this is the 15,587th. I do not wish, nor would I advise you to occupy your time in counting for yourselves, nor should I indeed have noticed the subject at all, but that I wish to suggest one remark upon it, and that is, that though we may generally look upon such calculations as only laborious idleness,—and they certainly have been carried to the most minute dissection of every part of Scripture, such as to how many times the word "Lord," the word "GOD," and even the word "and," occurs,—yet I believe that the integrity of the holy volume owes a vast deal to this scruple-weighing of these calculators. I do not say, nor do I think, that they had such motives in their minds; but whatever their reasons were, I cannot but think that there was an overruling Providence in thus converting these trifling and apparently useless investigations into additional guards and fences around the sacred text.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 8.—"*It is better to trust in the* LORD," etc. Luther on this text calleth it, *artem artium, et mirificam, ac suam artem, non fidere hominibus*, that is, the art of arts, and that which he had well studied, not to put confidence in man: as for trust in God, he calleth it *sacrificium omnium gratissimum et suavissimum, et cultum omnium pulcherrimum*, the most pleasant and sweetest of all sacrifices, the best of all services we perform to God.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 8.—"*It is better to trust in the* LORD." All make this acknowledgment, and yet there is scarcely one among a hundred who is fully persuaded that God alone can afford him sufficient help. That man has attained a high rank among the faithful, who resting satisfied in God, never ceases to entertain a lively hope, even when he finds no help upon earth.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 8.—It is a great cause oftentimes why God blesseth not means, because we are so apt to trust in them, and rob God of his glory, not waiting for a blessing at his hands. This causeth the Lord to cross us, and to curse his own benefits, because we seek not him, but sacrifice to our own nets, putting confidence in outward means. Therefore when we hope for help from them, God bloweth upon them, and turneth them to our hurt and destruction.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 8.—When my enemies have been brought to contempt, let not my friend present himself unto me as a good man, and bid me repose my hope in himself; for still must I trust in the Lord alone.—*Augustine.*

Verses 8, 9.—Nothing is more profitable than dwelling on familiar truths. Was there ever a good man who did not believe that it was better to trust in Jehovah than rely on any created arm? Yet David here repeats this truth, that if possible it may sink deep into every mind.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 9.—"*It is better to trust in the* LORD *than to put confidence in princes.*" David knew that by experience, for he confided in Saul his king, at another time in Achish, the Philistine, at another time in Ahithophel his own most prudent minister, besides some others; and they all failed him; but he never confided in God without feeling the benefit of it.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 9.—"*It is better,*" etc. Literally, "Good is it to trust in Jehovah more than to confide in man." This is the Hebrew form of comparison, and is equivalent to what is stated in our version. "It is *better,*" etc. It is better, (1) because man is weak,—but God is Almighty; (2) because man is selfish,—but God is benevolent; (3) because man is often faithless and deceitful,—God never; (4) because there are emergencies, as death, in which man cannot aid us, however faithful, kind, and friendly he may be,—but there are no circumstances in this life, and none in death, where God cannot assist us; and (5) because the ability of man to help us pertains at best only to the present life,—the power of God will be commensurate with eternity.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 9.—"*Than to put confidence in princes.*" Great men's words, saith one, are like dead men's shoes; he may go barefoot that waiteth for them.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 9.—They who constantly attend upon God, and depend upon him, have a much sweeter life, than those that wait upon princes with great observance and expectation. A servant of the Lord is better provided for than the greatest favourites and minions of princes.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 10.—"*All nations compassed me about.*" A multitude of enemies everywhere cannot hinder the presence of God with us. Acts xvii. 28. They are without; He is within, in our hearts; they are flesh; He is Spirit: they are frail; He is immortal and invincible.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 11.—Whether Tertullus persecute the church with his tongue, or Elymas with his hand, God hath the command of both. Indeed the wicked are the mediate causes of our troubles: the righteous are as the centre, the other the circumference; which way soever they turn, they find themselves environed; yet still the centre is fixed and immovable, being founded upon Christ. It is good for some men to have adversaries; for often they more fear to sin, lest they should despise them, than dislike it for conscience, lest God should condemn them. They speak evil of us: if true, let us amend it; if false, contemn it; whether false or true, observe it. Thus we shall learn good out of their evil; make them our tutors, and give them our pupilage. In all things let us watch them, in nothing fear them: "which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to us of salvation," Phil. i. 28. The church is that tower of David; if there be a thousand weapons to wound us, there are a thousand shields to guard us, Cant. iv. 4.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12.—"*They compassed me about like bees.*" Christ's enemies are so spiteful, that in fighting against his kingdom, they regard not what become of themselves, so they may hurt his people; but as the bee undoeth herself in stinging, and loseth her life or her power with her sting, so do they. All that the enemies of Christ's church can do against his people is but to trouble them externally; their wounds are like the sting of a bee, that is, unto pain and swelling, and a short trouble only, but are not deadly.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 12.—"*They compassed me about like bees.*" Now, as the north-east wind of course was adverse to any north-east progress, it was necessary that

the boat should be towed by the crew. As the rope was being drawn along through the grass on the banks it happened that it disturbed a swarm of bees. In a moment, like a great cloud, they burst upon the men who were dragging; everyone of them threw himself headlong into the water and hurried to regain the boat. The swarm followed at their heels, and in a few seconds filled every nook and cranny of the deck. What a scene of confusion ensued may readily be imagined.

Without any foreboding of ill, I was arranging my plants in my cabin, when I heard all around me a scampering which I took at first to be merely the frolics of my people, as that was the order of the day. I called out to enquire the meaning of the noise, but only got excited gestures and reproachful looks in answer. The cry of "Bees! bees!" soon broke upon my ear, and I proceeded to light a pipe. My attempt was entirely in vain; in an instant bees in thousands are about me, and I am mercilessly stung all over my face and hands. To no purpose do I try to protect my face with a handkerchief, and the more violently I fling my hands about, so much the more violent becomes the impetuosity of the irritated insects. The maddening pain is now on my cheek, now in my eye, now in my hair. The dogs from under my bed burst out frantically, overturning everything in their way. Losing well nigh all control over myself, I fling myself into the river; I dive down, but all in vain, for the stings rain down still upon my head. Not heeding the warning of my people, I creep through the reedy grass to the swampy bank. The grass lacerates my hands, and I try to gain the mainland, hoping to find shelter in the woods. All at once four powerful arms seize me and drag me back with such force that I think I must be choked in the mud. I am compelled to go back on board, and flight is not to be thought of. . . . I felt ready, in the evening, for an encounter with half a score of buffaloes or a brace of lions rather than have anything more to do with bees; and this was a sentiment in which all the ship's company heartily concurred.—*George Schweinfurth, in "The Heart of Africa,"* 1873.

Verse 12.—David said of his enemies, that they came about him like "*bees*"; he doth not say like *wasps*. For though they used their stings, yet he found honey in them too.—*Peter Smith*, 1644.

Verse 12.—"*They compassed me about like bees.*"

> As wasps, provoked by children in their play,
> Pour from their mansions by the broad highway,
> In swarms the guiltless traveller engage,
> Whet all their stings, and call forth all their rage,
> All rise in arms, and with a general cry,
> Assert their waxen domes, and buzzing progeny;
> Thus from the tents the fervent legion swarms,
> So loud their clamours, and so keen their arms. —*Homer.*

Verse 12.—"*They are quenched as the fire of thorns.*" The illustration from the "*fire of thorns*" is derived from the fact that they quickly kindle into a blaze, and then the flame soon dies away. In Eastern countries it was common to burn over their fields in the dry time of the year, and thus to clear them of thorns and briers and weeds. Of course, at such a time they would kindle quickly, and burn rapidly, and would soon be consumed. So the psalmist says it was with his enemies. He came upon them, numerous as they were, as the fire runs over a field in a dry time, burning everything before it.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 12.—"*In the name of the* LORD." This has been understood as the *tessera*, the sentence of attack, or signal to engage, like those of Cyrus—Jupiter is our leader and ally—Jupiter our captain and preserver. Cyropæd. l. 3 and 7; and Gideon, Judges vii. 18. This interpretation being only founded on the repetition, may it not more probably be designed as suited to the musical performance?—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 13.—"*Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall.*" The apostrophe

is strong, and probably directed to some particular person in the battle, who had put David in great danger.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 13.—"*Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall.*" Thou hast indeed. Thou hast done thy part, O Satan, and it has been well done. Thou hast known all my weakest parts, thou hast seen where my armour was not buckled on tightly, and thou hast attacked me at the right time and in the right way. The great Spanish poet, Calderon, tells of one who wore a heavy suit of armour for a whole year, and laid it by for one hour, and in that hour the enemy came, and the man paid for his negligence with his life. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."—*John Mason Neale.*

Verse 14.— *The* LORD *is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.*" "*My strength,*" that I am able to resist my enemies; "*my salvation,*" that I am delivered from my enemies; "*my song,*" that I may joyfully praise him and sing of him after I am delivered.—*William Nicholson*, 1662.

Verse 14.—Good songs, good promises, good proverbs, good doctrines are none the worse for age. What was sung just after the passage of the Red Sea, is here sung by the prophet, and shall be sung to the end of the world by the saints of the Most High.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 14.—"*And is become my salvation.*" Not that he hath become anything which he was not before, but because his people, when they believed on him, became what they were not before, and then he began to be salvation unto them when turned towards him, which he was not to them when turned away from himself.—*Augustine.*

Verse 15.—"*The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.*" Every one should be careful that his dwelling is one of the *tabernacles of the righteous,* and that he himself together with his household should walk in righteousness (Luke i. 75). And he should be so diligent in hymns and sacred songs, that his rooms should resound with them.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 16.—"*The right hand of the* LORD *doeth valiantly.*" Thrice he celebrateth God's right hand, to set forth his earnest desire to say the utmost; or, in reference to the Sacred Trinity, as some will have it.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 17.—"*I shall not die, but live.*" As Christ is risen, "we shall not die, but live"; we shall not die eternally, but we shall live in this world, the life of grace, and in the world to come, the life of glory; that we may in both declare the "works" and chant the praises of God our Saviour. We are "chastened" for our sins, but "not given over to death" and destruction everlasting; nay, our being "chastened" is now a proof that we are not so given over; "for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" Heb. xii. 7.—*George Horne.*

Verse 17.—"*I shall not die, but live.*" To live, signifies, not barely to live, but to live comfortably, to have content with our life; to live is to prosper. Thus the word is often used in Scripture. "*I shall not die, but live.*" David did not look upon himself as immortal, or that he should never die; he knew he was subject to the statute of death: but the meaning is, I shall not die now, I shall not die by the hands of these men, I shall not die the death which they have designed me to; or when he saith, "*I shall not die, but live,*" his meaning is, I shall live comfortably and prosperously, I shall live as a king. That which we translate (1 Sam. x. 24) "God save the king," is, "Let the king *live,*" that is, let him prosper, and have good days; let him have peace with all, or victory over his enemies.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 17.—"*I shall not die,*" etc. The following incident is worth recording: "Wicliffe was now getting old, but the Reformer was worn out rather by the harassing attacks of his foes, and his incessant and ever-growing labours, than

with the weight of years, for he was not yet sixty. He fell sick. With unbounded joy the friars heard that their great enemy was dying. Of course he was overwhelmed with horror and remorse for the evil he had done them, and they would hasten to his bedside and receive the expression of his penitence and sorrow. In a trice a little crowd of shaven crowns assembled round the couch of the sick man—delegates from the four orders of friars. 'They began fair,' wishing him 'health and restoration from his distemper'; but speedily changing their tone, they exhorted him, as one on the brink of the grave, to make full confession, and express his unfeigned grief for the injuries he had inflicted on their order. Wicliffe lay silent till they should have made an end, then, making his servant raise him a little on his pillow, and fixing his keen eyes upon them, he said with a loud voice, 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars.' The monks rushed in astonishment and confusion from the chamber.—*J. A. Wylie, in "The History of Protestantism."*

Verse 17.—"*I shall not die,*" not absolutely, for see Psalm lxxxix. 48; Heb. ix. 27; but not in the midst of my days, Psalm cii. 24; nor according to the will of mine enemies, who "*thrust at me that I might fall,*" verse 13. *But*, on the contrary, *I shall live*, not simply as he had hitherto lived, in the greatest distress, which would be a wretched life, a living death: but lively, joyous, happy. Of this, he says he is secure; this the word asserts. On what foundation does he rest? Verses 14, 15, "*Because God had become his salvation,*" and "*the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.*"—*Jacob Alting.*

Verse 17.—"*And declare the works of the* Lord." Matter of praise abounds in all the divine works, both of the general creation and preservation and of the redemption of our souls: chiefly, that God, besides the life of nature, has given to us the life of grace, without which we could not properly praise God and declare his works.—*Rivetus.*

Verse 17.—"*And declare the works of the* Lord." In the second member of the verse, he points out the proper use of life. God does not prolong the lives of his people, that they may pamper themselves with meat and drink, sleep as much as they please, and enjoy every temporal blessing; but to magnify him for his benefits which he is daily heaping upon them.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 17.—According to Matthesius, Luther had this verse written against his study wall.

Verse 18.—"*The* Lord *hath chastened me sore.*" Strong humours require strong physic to purge them out. Where corruption is deeply rooted in the heart, a light or small matter will not serve the turn to work it out. No; but a great deal of stir and ado must be made with it.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 18.—"*But he hath not given me over unto death.*" It might have been worse, may the afflicted saint say, and it will yet be better; it is in mercy and in measure that God chastiseth his children. It is his care that "the spirit fail not before him, nor the souls which he hath made," Isai. lvii. 16. If his child swoons in the whipping, God lets fall the rod, and falls a kissing it, to fetch life into it again.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 19.—"*Open to me the gates of righteousness.*" The gates won by his righteousness, to whom we daily say, "Thou only art holy"; the gates which needed the "Via Dolorosa" and the cross, before they could roll back on their hinges. On a certain stormy afternoon, after the sun had been for three hours darkened, the world again heard of that Eden from which, four thousand years before, Adam had been banished. "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." O blessed malefactor, who thus entered into the heavenly gardens! O happy thief, that thus stole the kingdom of heaven! And see how valiantly he now enters it. "*Open to me the gates of righteousness.*" Not "God be merciful to me a sinner"; not "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." But this is what is called the suppliant omnipotency of prayer. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may

have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—*John Mason Neale.*

Verse 21.—"*I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me.* There is a point which we would especially notice, and that is, praise for *hearing prayer.* In this point, almost above all others, God is frequently robbed of his praise. Men pray; they receive an answer to their prayers; and then forget to praise. This happens especially in small things; we should ever remember that whatever is worth praying for, is worth praising for also. The fact is, we do not recognize God in these small things as much as we should; if we do praise, it is for the receipt of the blessing, with which we are pleased, leaving out of account the One from whom the blessing has come. This is not acceptable to God; we must see him in the blessing, if we would really praise. The psalmist says, "*I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me*"; he praised not only because he had *received*, but also because he had been *heard*—because the living God, as a hearing God, was manifested in his mercies. And when we know that God has heard us, let us not delay our praise; if we put off our thanksgiving until perhaps only the evening, we may forget to praise at all; and if we do praise, it will in all probability be with only half the warmth which would animate our song at first. God loves a quick return for his blessings; one sentence of heartfelt thanksgiving is worth all the formalism of a more laboured service. There is a freshness about immediate praise which is like the bloom upon the fruit; its being spontaneous adds ineffably to its price.

Trace, then, dear reader, a connection between your God and your blessing. Recognize his hearing ear as well as his bounteous hand, and be yours the psalmist's words, "*I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me.*"—*Philip Bennet Power.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone.*" "*The head stone of the corner.*" Christ Jesus is a stone: no firmness, but in him. A fundamental stone: no building, but on him. A corner stone: no piecing nor reconciliation, but in him.—*James Ford*, 1856.

Verse 22.—"*The stone which the builders rejected,*" etc. To apply it to Christ, "*The Stone*" is the ground of all. Two things befall it; two things as contrary as may be,—1. *Refused*, cast away; then, called for again, and *made head of the building.* So, two parts there are to the eye. 1. The *refusing;* 2. the *raising;* which are his two estates, his *humiliation*, and his *exaltation.* In either of these you may observe two degrees, *a quibus*, and *quosque*, by whom and how far. *By whom refused?* We weigh the word, *ædificantes:* not by men unskilful, but by workmen, professed *builders;* it is so much the worse. *How far?* We weigh the word,—*reprobaverunt; usque ad reprobari*, even to a reprobation. It is not *improbaverunt*, *disliked*, as not fit for some eminent place; but *reprobaverunt*, *utterly reprobate*, for any place at all.

Again, *exalted*, by whom? The next words are *a Domino*, by *God*, as good a *builder*, nay, better than the best of them; which makes amends for the former. And *How far?* Placed by him, not in any part of the *building;* but in the part most in the eye (*the corner*), and in the highest place of it, *the very head.*

So, *rejected*, and that by the *builders*, and to the *lowest estate:* and from the *lowest estate exalted in caput anguli*, to the chiefest place of all; and that by God himself.—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone which the builders refused,*" etc. We need not wonder, that not only the powers of the world are usually enemies to Christ, and that the contrivers of policies, those builders, leave out Christ in their building, but that the pretended builders of the church of God, though they use the name of Christ, and serve their turn with that, yet reject himself, and oppose the power of his spiritual kingdom. There may be wit and learning,

and much knowledge of the Scriptures, amongst those that are haters of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the power of godliness, and corrupters of the worship of God. It is the spirit of humility and obedience, and saving faith, that teach men to esteem Christ, and build upon him. The vanity and folly of these builders' opinion appears in this, that they are overpowered by the great Architect of the church: his purpose stands. Notwithstanding their rejection of Christ, he is still made the head corner stone. They cast him away by their reproaches, and by giving him up to be crucified and then cast into the grave, causing a stone to be rolled upon this *stone* which they had so rejected, that it might appear no more, and so thought themselves sure. But even from thence did he arise, and "*became the head of the corner.*"—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone which the builders refused,*" etc. That is to say, God sent a living, precious, chosen stone on earth; but the Jews, who then had the building of the church, rejected that stone, and said of it, "This man, who observeth not the Sabbath, is not of God"; and, "We have no king but Cæsar," and, "That seducer said, I will rise after three days"; and many similar things beside. But this stone, so rejected by the builders as unfit for raising the spiritual edifice, "*is become the head of the corner*"; has been made by God, the principal architect, the bond to connect the two walls and keep them together; that is to say, has been made the head of the whole church, composed of Jews and Gentiles; and such a head, that whoever is not under him cannot be saved; and whoever is built under him, the living stone, will certainly be saved. Now all this "*is the Lord's doing,*" done by his election and design, without any intervention on the part of man, and therefore, "*it is wonderful in our eyes.*" For who is there that must not look upon it as a wonderful thing, to find a man crucified, dead and buried, rising, after three days, from the dead, immortal, with unbounded power, and declared Prince of men and angels, and a way opened through him for mortal man, to the kingdom of heaven, to the society of the angels, to a happy immortality?—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone which the builders refused.*" Here we behold with how strong and impregnable a shield the Holy Ghost furnishes us against the empty vauntings of the Papal clergy. Be it so, that they possess the name, "chief-builders"; but if they disown Christ, does it necessarily follow that we must disown him also? Let us rather contemn and trample under our feet all their decrees, and let us reverence this precious stone upon which our salvation rests. By the expression, "*is become the head of the corner,*" we are to understand the real foundation of the church, which sustains the whole weight of the edifice; it being requisite that the corners should form the main strength of buildings.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone,*" etc. That is, I, whom the great men and rulers of the people rejected (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), as the builders of a house reject a stone unfit to be employed in it, am now become king over Israel and Judah; and a type of that glorious King who shall hereafter be in like manner refused (Luke xix. 14, and xx. 17), and then be by God exalted to be Lord of all the world, and the foundation of all men's happiness.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone.*" The author of *Historia Scholastica* mentions it as a tradition that at the building of the second temple there was a particular *stone* of which that was literally true, which is here parabolically rehearsed, viz., that it had the hap to be often taken up by the builders, and as oft rejected, and at last was found to be perfectly fit for the most honourable place, that of the *chief corner-stone*, which coupled the sides of the walls together, the extraordinariness whereof occasioned the speech here following: "*This is the* LORD'S *doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.*"—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 22.—"*The head stone of the corner.*" How of the "*corner*"? "The *corner* is the place where two walls meet: and there be many twos in this *building:* the two walls of nations, *Jews* and *Gentiles;* the two of conditions, *bond* and *free;* the two of sex, *male* and *female:* the great two (which this

[Easter] day we celebrate) of the *quick* and the *dead;* above all, the greatest two of all, *heaven* and *earth.*—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 22.—"*Is become the head stone of the corner.*"

> Higher yet and ever higher, passeth he those ranks above,
> Where the seraphs are enkindled with the flame of endless love;
> Passeth them, for not e'en seraphs ever loved so well as he
> Who hath borne for his beloved, stripes, and thorns, and shameful tree;
> Ever further, ever onward, where no angel's foot may tread,
> Where the four and-twenty elders prostrate fall in mystic dread:
> Where the four strange living creatures sing their hymn before the throne,
> The Despised One and rejected passeth, in his might alone;
> Passeth through the dazzling rainbow, till upon the father's right
> He is seated, his Co-Equal, God of God, and Light of Light.
>
> —*R. F. Littledale.*

Verse 22.—"*Head stone of the corner.*" It is now clear to all by divine grace whom Holy Scripture calls the corner-stone. Him in truth who, taking unto himself from one side the Jewish, and from the other the Gentile people, unites, as it were, two walls in the one fabric of the Church; them of whom it is written, "He hath made both one"; who exhibited himself as the Corner-stone, not only in things below, but in things above, because he united on earth the nations of the Gentiles to the people of Israel, and both together to angels. For at his birth the angels exclaimed, "On earth peace, good will toward men."—*Gregory, quoted by Henry Newland,* 1860.

Verse 22.—"*The corner.*" By Bede it is rendered as a reason why the Jewish builders refused our Saviour Christ for the *head*-place, *Quia in uno pariete, stare amabant.* They could endure no *corner;* they must stand alone upon their own single wall; be of themselves, not join with Gentiles or Samaritans. And Christ they endured not, because they thought if he had been *head* he would have inclined that way. *Alias oves oportet me adducere* (John x. 16). *Alias* they could not abide. But sure, a purpose there must be, *alias oves adducendi,* of bringing in others, of joining a *corner,* or else we do not *facere secundùm exemplar,* build not according to Christ's pattern; our fashion of fabric is not like his.—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verses 22—27.—By the consent of all expositors, in this psalm is typed the coming of Christ, and his kingdom of the gospel. This is manifested by an *exaltation,* by an *exultation,* by a *petition,* by a *benediction.* The *exaltation:* ver. 22, "*The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*" The Jews refused this stone, but God hath built his church upon it.

The *exultation:* ver. 24, "*This is the day which the* LORD *hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*" A more blessed day than that day was wherein he made man, when he had done making the world; "*Rejoice we, and be glad in it.*"

The *petition:* ver. 25, "*Save now, I beseech thee, O* LORD: *O* LORD, *I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*" Thy justice would not suffer thee to save without the Messiah; he is come, "*Save now, O* LORD, *I beseech thee.*" Our Saviour is come, let mercy and salvation come along with him.

The *benediction* makes all clear: ver. 26, "*Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the* LORD." For what David here prophesied, the people after accomplished: Matt. xxi. 9, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD." The corollary or sum is in my text: ver. 27, "*God is the* LORD, *which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*"—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 24.—"*This is the day which the* LORD *hath made.*" 1. Here is the doctrine of the Christian sabbath: "*it is the day which the* LORD *hath made,*" has made remarkable, made holy, has distinguished it from other days; he has made it for man; it is therefore called the Lord's day, for it bears his image and superscription. 2. The duty of the Sabbath, "*we will rejoice and be glad in it*"; not only in the institution of the day, that there is such a day appointed, but in the occasion of it, Christ's becoming "*the head of the corner.*" This we

ought to rejoice in, both as his honour and our advantage. Sabbath days must be rejoicing days, and then they are to us as the days of heaven. See what a good Master we serve, who having instituted a day for his service, appoints it to be spent in holy joy.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 24.—"*This is the day,*" etc. The "queen of days," as the Jews call the Sabbath. Arnobius interpreteth this text of the Christian Sabbath; others, of the day of salvation by Christ exalted to be the head corner-stone; in opposition to that dismal day of man's fall.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 24.—Because believers have ever cause for comfort, therefore they are commanded always to rejoice, Phil. iii. Whether their sins or sufferings come into their hearts, they must not sorrow as they that have no hope. In their saddest conditions, they have the Spirit of consolation. There is seed of joy sown within them when it is turned under the clods, and appears not above ground. But there are special times when God calls for this grain to spring up. They have some red letters, some holy days in the calendar of their lives, wherein this joy, as wine at a wedding, is most seasonable; but among all those days it never relisheth so well, it never tasteth so pleasantly, as on a Lord's-day. Joy suits no person so much as a saint, and it becomes no season so well as a Sabbath.

Joy in God on other days is like the birds chirping in winter, which is pleasing; but joy on the Lord's-day is like their warbling times and pretty notes in spring, when all other things look with a suitable delightful aspect. "*This is the day which the* LORD *hath made,*" (he that made all days, so especially this day, but what follows?) "*we will rejoice and be glad in it.*" In which words we have the church's solace, or joy, and the season, or day of it. Her solace was great: "*We will rejoice and be glad.*" Those expressions are not needless repetitions, but shew the exuberancy or high degree of their joy. The season of it: "*This is the day which the* LORD *hath made.*" Compare this place with Matt. xxi. 22, 23, and Acts iv. 11, and you will find that the precedent verses are a prophetical prediction of Christ's resurrection, and so this verse foretells the church's joy upon that memorable and glorious day. And, indeed, if "a feast be made for laughter," Eccles. x. 19, then that day wherein Christ feasteth his saints with the choicest mercies may well command their greatest spiritual mirth. A thanksgiving-day hath a double precedency of a fast-day. On a fast-day we eye God's anger; on a thanksgiving-day we look to God's favour. In the former we specially mind our corruptions; in the latter, God's compassions;—therefore a fast-day calls for sorrow, a thanksgiving-day for joy. But the Lord's-day is the highest thanksgiving-day, and deserveth much more than the Jewish Purim, to be a day of feasting and gladness, and a good day.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 24.—"*Day which the* LORD *hath made.*" As the sun in heaven makes the natural day by his light, so does Christ the Sun of Righteousness make ours a spiritual day.—*Starke.*

Verse 24.—"*Day which the* LORD *hath made.*" Adam introduced a day of sadness, but another day is made by Christ: Abraham saw his day from afar, and was glad; we will walk even now in his light.—*Johann David Friesch,* 1731.

Verse 25.—"*Save.*" With the Hebrews *salvation* is a wide word, comprising all the favours of God that may lead to preservation; and therefore the psalmist elsewhere extends this act both to man and beast, and, as if he would comment upon himself, expounds σῶσον *save,* by εὐόδωσον *prosper.* It is so dear a title of God, that the prophet cannot have enough of it.—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 25.—"*Save now, I beseech thee, O* LORD." Let him have the acclamations of the people as is usual at the inauguration of a prince; let every one of his loyal subjects shout for joy, "*Save now, I beseech thee, O* LORD." This is like *vivat rex,* and speaks both a hearty joy for his accession to the crown, an entire satisfaction in his government, and a zealous affection to the interests

and honour of it. Hosanna signifies, "*Save now, I beseech thee.*" Lord, save me, I beseech thee; let this Saviour be my Saviour; and in order to that my Ruler: let me be taken under his protection, and owned as one of his willing subjects. His enemies are my enemies; Lord, I beseech thee, save me from them. Send me an interest in that prosperity which his kingdom brings with it to all those that entertain it. Let my soul prosper and be in health, in that peace and righteousness which his government brings. Ps. lxxii. 3. Let me have victory over those lusts that war against my soul, and let divine grace go on in my heart, conquering and to conquer.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 25.—"*Save now,*" or, *hosanna.* Our thanksgivings on earth must always be accompanied with prayers for further mercies, and the continuance of our prosperity; our hallelujahs with hosannas.—*Ingram Cobbin.*

Verse 25.—"*Save now, I beseech thee, O* LORD," etc. Hosanna. The cry of the multitudes as they thronged in our Lord's triumphal procession into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 9, 18; Mar. xi. 9, 15, John xii. 13) was taken from this psalm, from which they were accustomed to recite the 25th and 26th verses at the Feast of Tabernacles. On that occasion the great *Hallel*, consisting of psalms cxiii.—cxviii. was chanted by one of the priests, and at certain intervals the multitudes joined in the responses, waving their branches of willow and palm, and shouting as they waved them, Hallelujah, or *Hosannah*, or, "*O* LORD, *I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*" This was done at the recitation of the first and last verses of Ps. cxviii.; but according to the school of Hillel, at the words "*Save now, we beseech thee.*" The school of Shammai, on the contrary, say it was at the words, "*Send now prosperity.*" Rabban Gamaliel and R. Joshua were observed by R. Akiba to wave their branches only at the words, "*Save now, we beseech thee*" (Mishna, *Succah*, iii. 9). On each of the seven days during which the feast lasted the people thronged the court of the temple, and went in procession about the altar, setting their boughs bending towards it; the trumpets sounding as they shouted *Hosannah.* But on the seventh day they marched seven times round the altar, shouting meanwhile the great Hosannah to the sound of the trumpets of the Levites (Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, xvi. 2). The very children who could wave the palm branches were expected to take part in the solemnity (Mishna, *Succah*, iii. 15; Matt. xxi. 15). From the custom of waving the boughs of myrtle and willow during the service the name Hosannah was ultimately transferred to the boughs themselves, so that according to Elias Levita (*Thisbi*, s. v.), "the bundles of the willows of the brook which they carry at the Feast of Tabernacles are called Hosannahs."—*William Aldis Wright, in "Smith's Dictionary of the Bible,"* 1863.

Verse 25.—"*Send now prosperity.*" God will send it, but his people must pray for it. "I came for thy prayers," Dan. x. 12.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 26.—"*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the* LORD." The difference between Christ and Antichrist is to be noticed, because Christ did not come in his own name, but in the name of the Father; of which he himself testified, John v., "*I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*" Thus all faithful ministers of the Church must not come in their own name, or the name of Baal, or of Mammon and their own belly, but in the name of God, with a lawful call; concerning which see Heb. v., Rom. x. and xv.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Verse 27.—"*God is the* LORD, *which hath shewed us light.*" The psalmist was clearly possessed of light, for he says, "*God is the* LORD, *which hath shewed us light.*" He was evidently, then, possessed of light; and this light was in him as "the light of life." This light had shone into his heart; the rays and beams of divine truth had penetrated into his conscience. He carried about with him a light which had come from God; in this light he saw light, and in this light he discerned everything which the light manifested. Thus by this internal

light he knew what was good and what was evil, what was sweet and what was bitter, what was true and what was false, what was spiritual and what was natural. He did not say, This light came from creature exertion, this light was the produce of my own wisdom, this light was nature transmuted by some action of my own will, and thus gradually rose into existence from long and assiduous cultivation. But he ascribes the whole of that light which he possessed unto God the Lord, as the sole author and the only giver of it. Now, if God the Lord has ever showed you and me the same light which he showed his servant of old, we carry about with us more or less of a solemn conviction that we have received this light from him. There will, indeed, be many clouds of darkness to cover it; there will often be doubts and fears, hovering like mists and fogs over our souls, whether the light which we have received be from God or not. But in solemn moments when the Lord is pleased a little to revive his work; at times and seasons when he condescends to draw forth the affections of our hearts unto himself, to bring us into his presence, to hide us in some measure in the hollow of his hand, and give us access unto himself, at such moments and seasons we carry about with us, in spite of all our unbelief, in spite of all the suggestions of the enemy, in spite of all doubts and fears and suspicions that rise from the depths of the carnal mind, in spite of all these counter-workings and underminings, we carry about with us at these times a solemn conviction that we have light, and that this light we have received from God. And why so? Because we can look back to a time when we walked in no such light, when we felt no such light, when everything spiritual and heavenly was dark to us, and we were dark to them.

Those things which the Spirit of God enables a man to do, are in Scripture sometimes called *sacrifices*. . "That we may offer," we read, "spiritual *sacrifices* acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ." The apostle speaks of "receiving of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from the brethren at Philippi; an odour of a sweet smell; a *sacrifice* acceptable and well-pleasing to God." Phil. iv. 18. So he says to the Hebrew church: "But to do good and to communicate (that is, to the wants of God's people), forget not; for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased." Heb. xiii. 16. Well, then, these spiritual sacrifices which a man offers unto God are bound also *to the horns of the altar*. They are not well-pleasing in the sight of God, except they are bound to the horns of the altar, so as to derive all their acceptance from the altar. Our prayers are only acceptable to God as they are offered through the cross of Jesus. Our praises and thanksgivings are only acceptable to God as they are connected with the cross of Christ, and ascend to the Father through the propitiation of his dear Son. The ordinances of God's house are only acceptable to God as spiritual sacrifices, when they are bound to the horns of the altar. Both the ordinances of the New Testament—baptism and the Lord's supper—have been bound by the hands of God himself to the horns of the altar; and no one either rightly went through the one, or rightly received the other, who had not been first spiritually bound by the same hand to the horns of the altar. Every act of liberality, every cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, every feeling of sympathy and affection, every kind word, every compassionate action, shown to a brother; all and each are only acceptable to God as they ascend to him through the mediation of his dear Son. And, therefore, every sacrifice of our own comfort, or of our own advantage, of our own time, or of our own money, for the profit of God's children, is only a spiritual and acceptable sacrifice so far as it is bound to the horns of the altar, linked on to the cross of Jesus, and deriving all its fragrance and odour from its connection with the incense there offered by the Lord of life and glory.—*J. C. Philpot.*

Verse 27.—How comfortable is the light! 'Tis so comfortable that light and comfort are often put for the same thing: "*God is the* LORD, *which hath shewed us light*," that is, the light of counsel what to do, and the light of comfort in what we do, or after all our sufferings. Light is not only a candle held to us,

to do our work by, but it comforts and cheereth us in our work. Eccl. xi. 7.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 27.—"*Shewed us light:*" "*bind the sacrifice.*" Here is somewhat received; somewhat to be returned. God hath blessed us, and we must bless God. His grace, and our gratitude, are the two lines my discourse must run upon. They are met in my text; let them as happily meet in your hearts, and they shall not leave you till they bring you to heaven.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 27.—"*Bind the sacrifice with cords,*" etc. The sacrifice we are to offer to God, in gratitude for redeeming love, is ourselves, not to be slain upon the altar, but "living sacrifices" (Rom. xii. 1) to be bound to the altar; spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, in which our hearts must be fixed and engaged, as the sacrifice was bound "with cords to the horns of the altar."—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 27.—"*Bind the sacrifice,*" etc. 'Tis a saying among the Hebrews, that the beasts that were offered in sacrifice, they were the most struggling beasts of all the rest; such is the nature of us unthankful beasts, when we should love God again, we are readier to run away from him; we must be tied to the altar with cords, to draw from us love or fear.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 27.—"*With cords.*" This word is sometimes used for *thick twisted cords*, Judges xv. 13; sometimes for *thick branches* of trees, used at some feasts, Ezek. xix. 11, Levit. xxiii. 40. Hereupon this sentence may two ways be read; *bind the feast with thick branches*, or, *bind the sacrifice with cords;* both mean one thing, that men should keep the festivity with joy and thanks to God, as Israel did at their solemnities.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 27.—"*Even unto the horns of the altar.*" Before these words must be understood, *lead it:* for the victims were bound to rings fixed in the floor. "*The horns*" were architectural ornaments, a kind of capitals, made of iron or of brass, somewhat in the form of the curved horns of an animal, projecting from the four angles of the altar. The officiating priest, when he prayed, placed his hands on them, and sometimes sprinkled them with the blood of the sacrifice: compare Exod. xxx. 3; Lev. iv. 7, 18. At the end of this verse the word *saying* must be supplied.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 27.—"*Unto the horns.*" That is, all the court over, until you come even to the horns of the altar, intending hereby many sacrifices or boughs.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 28.—"*God.*" The original for "*God*" gives force to this passage: Thou art my "*El*"—The Mighty One; therefore will I praise thee: my "*Eloah*"—a varied form with substantially the same sense, "and I will extol thee"—lift thee high in glory and honour.—*Henry Cowles.*

Verse 28.—This "extolling the Lord" will accomplish one of the great ends of praise, viz., his exaltation. It is true that God both can and will exalt himself, but it is at once the duty and the privilege of his people to exalt him. His name should be upborne and magnified by them; the glory of that name is now, as it were, committed to them; what use are we making of the opportunity and the privilege?—*Philip Bennet Power.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verses 1—4.—I. The subject of song—"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good." II. The chorus—"His mercy endureth for ever." III. The choir—"Let Israel now say," etc.; "Let the house of Aaron," etc.; "Let them that fear the Lord," etc. IV. The rehearsal—"Let them *now* say," that they may be better prepared for universal praise hereafter.

Verse 5.—I. The season for prayer—"in distress." II. The answer in season—"The Lord answered me." III. The answer beyond the request—"And set me," etc.

Verse 6.—I. When may a man know that God is on his side? II. What confidence may that man enjoy who is assured of divine aid?

Verse 7.—I. The value of true friends. II. The greater value of help from above.

Verses 8, 9.—"*Better.*" It is wiser, surer, morally more right, more ennobling, more happy in result.

Verse 10.—Take a wide range and consider what has been done, should be done, and may be done "in the name of the Lord."

Verse 12.—I. Faith's innumerable annoyances. II. Their speedy end. III. Faith's complete victory.

Verse 13.—I. Our great antagonist. II. His fierce attacks. II. His evident object: "that I might fall." IV. His failure: "but the Lord helped me."

Verse 14.—I. Strength under affliction. II. Song in hope of deliverance. III. Salvation, or actual escape out of trial.

Verse 15.—The joy of Christian households. It is joy in salvation: it is expressed,—"The voice": it abides: "the voice *is*": it is joy in the protection and honour given by the Lord's right hand.

Verses 15, 16.—I. True joy is peculiar *to* the righteous. II. *In* their tabernacles: in their pilgrimage state. III. *For* salvation: rejoicing and salvation go together. IV. *From* God: "the right hand," etc.: three right hands; both the salvation and the joy are from the hand of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; the right hand of each doeth valiantly.—*G. R.*

Verse 17.—I. Good men are often in special danger: Joseph in the pit; Moses in the ark of bulrushes; Job on the dunghill; David's narrow escapes from the hand of Saul; Paul let down in a basket; what a fruit basket was that! How much was suspended upon that cord! The salvation of how many! II. Good men have often a presentiment of their recovery from special danger: "I shall not die, but live." III. Good men have a special desire for the preservation of their lives: "live and declare the works of the Lord."—*G. R.*

Verses 17, 19, 22.—The victory of the risen Saviour and its far-reaching consequences: (1) Death is vanquished; (2) the gates of righteousness are opened; (3) the corner-stone of the church is laid.—*Deichert, in Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 18.—I. The afflictions of the people of God are chastisements: "the Lord hath chastened me." II. Those chastisements are often severe: "hath chastened me *sore*." III. The severity is limited: "it is not unto death."—*G. R.*

Verse 19.—I. Access to God desired. II. Humbly requested: "Open to me." III. Boldly accepted: "I will go into them." IV. Gratefully enjoyed: "And praise the Lord."

Verse 22.—In these words we may notice the following particulars. I. The metaphorical view in which the church is here represented, namely, that of a *house* or *building*. II. The character that our Immanuel bears with respect to this building; he is *the stone* in a way of eminence, without whom there can be no building, no house for God to dwell in among the children of men. III. The character of the workmen employed in this spiritual structure; they are called *builders*. IV. A fatal error they are charged with in building the house of God; they *refuse* the stone of God's choosing; they do not allow him a place in his own house. V. Notice the place that Christ should and shall have in this building, let the builders do their worst; he *is made the head stone of the corner*. The words immediately following declare how this is effected, and how the saints are affected with the views of his exaltation, notwithstanding the malice of hell and earth: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes."—*Ebenezer Erskine.*

Verses 22, 23.—I. The mystery stated. 1. That which is least esteemed by men as a means of salvation is most esteemed by God. 2. That which is most

esteemed by God w en made known is least esteemed by man. II. The mystery explained. The way of salvation is the Lord's doing, therefore marvellous in our eyes.—*G. R.*

Verses 22—25. —I. Christ rejected. II. Christ exalted. III. His exaltation is due to God alone. IV. His exaltation commences a new era. V. His exaltation suggests a new prayer. See Spurgeon's Sermon, No. 1,420.

Verse 24.—I. What is spoken of. 1. The gospel day. 2. The sabbath day. II. What is said of it. 1. It is given by God. 2. To be joyfully received by man.—*G. R.*

Verse 25.—What is church prosperity? Whence must it come? How can we obtain it?

Verse 25.—I. The object of the prayer. 1. Salvation from sin. 2. Prosperity in righteousness. II. The earnestness of the prayer: "I beseech thee, I beseech thee." III. The urgency of the prayer, "now—now"—now that the gates of righteousness are open, now that the foundation stone is laid, now that the gospel day has come—now, Lord! now!—*G. R.*

Verse 27.—"*Bind the sacrifice,*" etc. Devotion is the mother, and she hath four daughters. 1. Constancy: "Bind the sacrifice." 2. Fervency: Bind it "with cords." 3. Wisdom. Bind it "to the altar." 4. Confidence. Even to the "horns" of the altar.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 27.—"*Bind the sacrifice with cords,*" etc. I. What is the sacrifice? Our whole selves, every talent, all our time, property, position, mind, heart, temper, life to the last. II. Why does it need binding? It is naturally restive. Long delay, temptations, wealth, rank, discouragement, scepticism, all tend to drive it from the altar. III. To what is it bound? To the doctrine of atonement. To Jesus and his work. To Jesus and our work. IV. What are the cords? Our own vows. The need of souls. Our joy in the work. The great reward. The love of Christ working upon us by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 28.—I. The gladdest fact in all the world: "Thou art my God." II. The fittest spirit in which to enjoy it: "Praise thee."

Verse 28.—I. The effect of Christ being sacrificed for us: "Thou art my God." II. The effect of our being offered as an acceptable sacrifice to him: "I will praise thee, I will exalt thee." Or, I. The covenant blessing: "Thou art my God." II. The covenant obligation: "I will praise thee."—*G. R.*

Verse 29.—I. The beginning and the end of salvation is mercy. II. The beginning and end of its requirements is thanksgiving.—*G. R.*

WORK UPON THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH PSALM.

In "The Works of John Boys," 1626, folio, pp. 861—870, there is an exposition of this psalm.

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